

# The African Communist

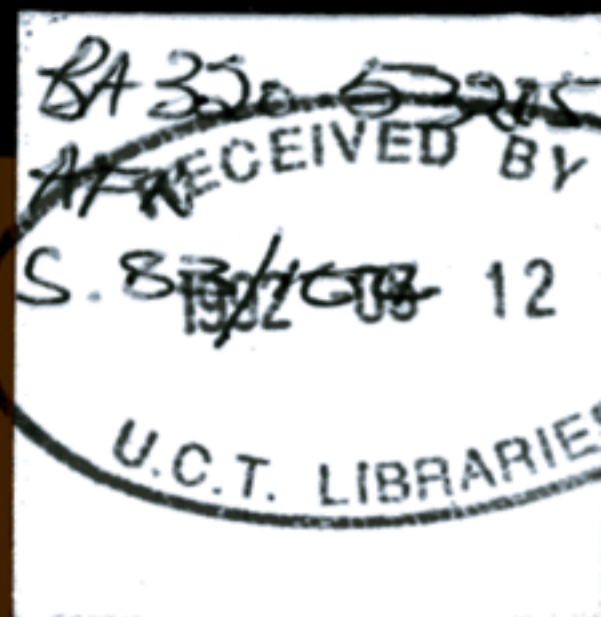
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## FORWARD TO PEOPLE'S POWER **THE CHALLENGE AHEAD**

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SOUTH AFRICAN COMMUNIST PARTY  
CENTRAL COMMITTEE STATEMENT



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# FORWARD TO PEOPLE'S POWER — THE CHALLENGE AHEAD

Statement adopted at an augmented meeting of the Central Committee of the South African Communist Party in November 1979

We stand on the eve of a new and more challenging decade. Looking ahead beyond the 80s there can be little doubt that we are entering the most decisive phase of the long history of our struggle.

Our struggle, backed by all external imperialist powers, is now being transformed into a struggle against the mechanisms of racial exploitation and the reinforcement of the network of national oppression. It is the transformation which is essential if the new hegemony of imperialism is not to be reproduced and provided with the apparatus of repression and super-exploitation of the black masses.

The struggle is propelled into this feverish activity in part by its need to overthrow the system of profits in an economy which is characterised by an increasing dependence on foreign capital. It is well to bear in mind also that the world economy is now in a state of crisis and that the South African economy is integrated in this world economy.

Despite a large foreign trade surplus of trade, the South African economy continues to stagnate. Unemployment is still declining and consumer spending remains static. In the 1980s the economic crisis is accelerating. Black unemployment has reached crisis proportions. The bulk of the white bourgeoisie are concerned

# **FORWARD TO PEOPLE'S POWER — THE CHALLENGE AHEAD**

*Statement adopted at an augmented meeting of the Central Committee of the South African Communist Party in November 1979*

We meet on the eve of a new and most challenging decade. Looking ahead towards the 80s there can be little doubt that we are entering the most decisive phase in the long history of our struggle.

The ruling class, backed by its external imperialist allies, is working feverishly to adjust and overhaul the mechanisms of class exploitation and thus to reinforce the whole framework of national oppression. This is the framework within which South African capitalism is reproduced and provided with the apparatus to ensure the continued super-exploitation of the black masses.

The ruling class is compelled into this feverish activity in part by its need to continue making super-profits in an economy which is characterized by an endemic and growing crisis. It is well to bear in mind also that the world capitalist economy in which the South African economy is integrated is itself afflicted by a deepening crisis.

Despite a large surplus in the balance of trade, the South African economy continues to stagnate. Investment is still declining and consumer spending remains static. In the meantime inflation is accelerating. Black unemployment has reached crisis proportions. Sections of the white bourgeoisie are confronted

with bankruptcy. When South African state monopoly capitalism tries to reduce inflation, it forces the economy into further recession; when it tries to reflate the economy, it gives an added spurt to inflation. Daily, capitalism is proving to the masses of our people that it is a social system which benefits a handful at the expense of the vast majority.

The growth of the military-industrial complex in South Africa, the statutory integration of all industry in the war economy, the centralisation of all the arms of the security apparatus in the hands of the fascist Prime Minister, the conscription and indoctrination of the white youth, the use of the state-controlled radio and television to promote a war psychosis, the stepping up of attacks on the frontline states and the threat of the resort to atomic weapons — all these are symptoms of the increasing aggressiveness of the South African ruling class which threatens not only the security and well-being of all the South African people but also the maintenance of peace in Africa and the world. What is the source nourishing the aggressiveness of the ruling class?

We see on the one hand its ceaseless drive for super-profits, together with an equally insatiable drive to enlarge its sphere of domination which is necessarily accompanied by militarisation and increasing violence against the people both inside South Africa and beyond its borders. We also see, on the other hand, the sharpening social contradictions which threaten the system and compel greater violence from the rulers in order to safeguard that system.

Under the guise of 'reformism' the ruling class is engaged in far-reaching manoeuvres to intensify race oppression and exploitation. The decade of the 80s is its target date for achieving the 'final solution': the complete political, social and constitutional separation of the African, Indian and Coloured communities; the total destruction of the cohesion and national awareness of the African peoples; the confirmation, once and for all, of its hold on the fruits of armed conquest, and the enforced scattering of our people into Bantustan tribal backyards whose impoverished and landless inhabitants will wander back and forth as foreign migrant cheap labour and as perpetual servants in their ancestral land.

This onslaught on the black masses is accompanied by measures to tempt a tiny minority with 'concessions' intended to win them over to collaboration with apartheid's grand design.

Two accompanying processes are taking place: on the one side millions are being uprooted and hounded from their homes; on the other side the few who can afford it are being offered 99-year leases in some urban areas. On the one side access by the African people to real political power is being sealed off more tightly than ever before; on the other side a tiny bureaucratic and administrative

elite is given well-paid office in the Bantustans. On the one side, miserable wages and massive unemployment are the lot of the millions of urban and rural working people; on the other side a tiny fraction is given hope of skilled and semi-skilled employment. And so it goes on at every level of the social and economic structure.

### **Apartheid is being intensified**

One thing is crystal clear. Every single so-called concession has its counterpart in measures against the mass of the people. Apartheid is certainly not dead, as claimed by Koornhof during his recent public relations exercise in the United States. On the contrary it is being pursued with greater energy than ever before, and those who experience its cruelties in their daily lives clearly grasp its true essence.

Apartheid is not just racism in sport or separate theatres or colour-bar hotels or such-like. These humiliations bred of white supremacy were in force centuries before the word apartheid was invented. Neither is apartheid just black job exclusion against which many employers (in the interests of higher profits) have ranged themselves from the beginning of the century. Indeed, there is no single major aspect of apartheid practice whose ingredients cannot be found in South Africa's earlier history: the exploitation of the reserves as a primary source of cheap labour-power; the absence of civil and political rights for the black people; the pass laws; the locations and the compounds; the persecution of workers and national liberation organisations; the bar against genuine black trade union organisation; the monopoly by whites of 87% of the land, and so on.

Apartheid did not initiate race and class domination. It adjusted and intensified the basic components of the exploitative system in order to ensure its reproduction in changing economic conditions. Above all, apartheid, like its blood brother fascism, sharpened ruling class repression and terror in an attempt to crush the rising challenge to the system from the oppressed, especially the black working class. And when we turn to examine the basic character of the exploitation of the black people and not just the changing forms in which it is expressed ideologically, there cannot be the slightest doubt that apartheid as an exploitative system is being intensified as never before in our history.

What we face from our ruling class at present is not a tendency towards reform but a tendency towards even more terrible repression, and a more feverish advance in the direction of complete national domination. Apartheid is not dead or dying, it has to be killed by a people's revolutionary onslaught. What ought clearly to be dead is the liberal illusion that the system will be compelled



to reform itself by the logic of economic necessity; an illusion which continues to be spread in spite of the fact that the worst excesses of racist oppression and brutality have been perpetrated during the period of Nationalist rule when the economy made its most dramatic advances.

Some changes in the non-essential social sphere are being introduced in an attempt to lessen South Africa's growing isolation in a world which cannot stomach its outrages. Other concessions are being introduced in an attempt to encourage the growth of a black middle class who it is hoped will play along with the racist game. Yet other adjustments (for example in the area of skilled and semi-skilled work) reflect the needs of a changing economy whose capital reproduction and growth are obstructed by certain outmoded practices. Also in some areas, the enemy is being forced to engage in tactical retreats because of the threat posed by the people's struggles and their increasing militancy. Nevertheless, far from weakening the racist-exploitative structure as a whole, the abandonment or transformation of some of these practices is intended to assist the political and economic consolidation of the system of the super-exploitation of the black workers.

### **Differences in the White Power Bloc**

This is not to say that the ruling class and its allies within the white political power bloc agree completely on tactics. The complexity of the conditions in which apartheid domination has to fight for its survival is causing divisions and infighting within the white power bloc. Without deviating from our main task of mobilising the black oppressed masses as the motive force of our revolution, we must nevertheless seek ways of taking advantage of these divisions further to weaken the enemy.

Within white politics, within the Nationalist Party itself, and the organised white working class, differences remain on the pace and character of the adjustments. Why is this so and what is their significance?

The tactics of the regime and the differences within its ranks cannot be fully understood by looking only at purely economic factors. The economic imperative of ensuring the production and reproduction of capitalist accumulation places broad limits on the range of policy options open to the ruling class. But it is in the arena of political struggle both *between* and *within* the dominant and dominated classes that these conflicts take place. This is a struggle which has roots in the class conflicts of the immediate past, the history of which is thus significant. What is the background of some of these struggles?

Different sections of South African urban and rural capitalism have a long

history of competition for cheap black labour power. The white working class has itself fought bitterly to monopolise the upper categories of employment to the exclusion of the blacks. These are some of the economic factors which gave rise to contradictions fought out in the arena of white politics.

The historic in-fighting between national and foreign interests in the earlier stages of emergence of South African capitalism gave birth to ethnic passions between the English and Afrikaners. The exploitation of these passions helped the Afrikaner middle class to climb to a position of dominance in the state apparatus and won for it a share at the higher economic levels. In its trail to the top this aspirant bourgeoisie inspanned the white working class whose political and economic privileges vis-a-vis the black people were more and more institutionalised.

The complex interplay of competitive interests between the different classes and groups which make up the dominant white community produced ideologies which, although rooted in the past, continue to maintain some of their momentum. At given moments, these ideologies even act to blind individuals and groups to the new needs of the exploitative system as a whole. It is partly against the background of these and related factors that the so-called divide between the 'verligtes' and 'verkrampes' must be understood and assessed.

It is also the virtual monopoly of the top positions in the state apparatus which was won and consolidated by Afrikaner nationalism after 1948, which continues to nourish a degree of resentment between the two language groups.

Looked at from the point of view of those at the receiving end of racist brutality, it is usually the Afrikaner — the 'Boer' — who directs and wields the gun and the baton, who is the warder and the torturer. As we saw in Soweto, his language became a symbol of the worst excesses of race tyranny. The attempted imposition of Afrikaans on the African schools was the starting-point of the youth revolt. Although this kind of response to Afrikaner autocracy is understandable and must be harnessed, it must not be allowed to obscure the fact that the state and its apparatus of political and military terror is, in the last resort, an instrument of the ruling class whose dominant interests it protects. The ruling class in South Africa is not just the Afrikaner autocracy which dominates the political and administrative positions but those — both English and Afrikaner — who are the owners of the means of production. At this strategic level, the singling out of the one language group as the chief target of the liberation drive helps to create vagueness and confusion on who the real enemy is, and encourages the illusion that the kind of radical change which we seek will be advanced by a mere change in the ethnic composition of those who occupy the positions of *political* power.



## **Growing Unity at the Top**

There can be little doubt that the current offensive against the oppressed people has the broad endorsement of all the main factions within the white power bloc, who, at the economic level, are more and more linked in a chain of interdependence. As a result of monopoly trends there has grown a close interlocking of mining, industrial, finance and farming capital, lessening some of the contradictions between them and between 'foreign' (mainly British) and 'national' capital. At the political level the dominant faction within the Nationalist Party is increasingly becoming the spokesman of monopoly capital which in 1948 had still virtually excluded the Afrikaner. The Afrikaner breakthrough in all these sectors has taken much of the sting out of the English-Afrikaner conflict. The boardroom is a most effective uniting factor and the recent selective inclusion of a few blacks (e.g. Motsuenyane, President of NAFCOG for I.C.I. Chemicals) has the same purpose. In South Africa's crisis politics of today Anglo-American and the Afrikaner political establishment have moved closer to one another and co-operate increasingly. While the regime does its dirty work at home, the Oppenheimers play a vital role in developing life-lines to outside loans, markets, and know-how.

Less than ever before in our history can we today draw a clear line between Anglo-American and SANLAM, between a Rupert and an Oppenheimer when it comes to the broad direction in which the structure as a whole is moving. General Mining, the second biggest mining house, is owned 60% by Federale Mynbou (itself controlled by SANLAM) and 40% by Anglo-American Corporation. The two main tycoons behind the Urban Foundation are Oppenheimer and Rupert.

The mild resistance of the organised white trade union movement as a whole to changes which it previously fought (sometimes with arms in hand) will be referred to later. At this point, suffice it to say that its entrenchment as an aristocracy of labour, the elevation of large numbers of white workers to purely supervisory functions over black labour, the more recent measures to maintain and strengthen white dominance in the trade union field, and the growing gap between white and black wages in all the main sectors, guarantee support from white wage-earners for the ruling class policy aimed at entrenching white domination.

It is national domination which cements together the different elements of the ruling class and its allies into an easily recognized power bloc. It is this issue which, in varying degrees, serves the immediate material interests of all classes and groups within the white community. And it is the maintenance of national domination which is being threatened as never before by the potential which

showed itself in the mounting national and class struggles of the 70s, the growing impact of the national liberation movement headed by the African National Congress, and the radical transformations which have taken place in Southern Africa.

### **Growing Conflict in Southern Africa**

Southern Africa constitutes one theatre of struggle, an area which, together with the Middle East and South East Asia, has become one of the focal points in the international confrontation between the forces of national liberation, socialism and peace on the one hand and imperialism and war on the other.

Overestimating its own strength and arrogantly underestimating the resolve of the peoples of Southern Africa to free themselves, imperialism had for many years comforted itself with the illusion that our region would forever remain its preserve.

The historic victory over Portuguese colonialism in Mozambique and Angola and the transformation of Frelimo and the MPLA-Party of Labour into Marxist-Leninist parties which have begun to lay the foundations for an advance towards a socialist society not only put paid to this illusion. They also created new political and physical conditions for the pursuit of our struggle and made a profound psychological impact on the masses of our people.

At the same time the racist white minority regimes and their imperialist allies can no longer hide the fact that the forces of national liberation in Namibia, Zimbabwe and South Africa, under the leadership of SWAPO, the Patriotic Front and the ANC respectively, are successfully raising the struggle to new levels. Steadily, the balance of power in these countries has been shifting in our favour.

The "total war strategy" of continuous and increasing aggression that the Prime Minister of fascist South Africa, P.W. Botha, has declared, is designed to meet this situation not only within South Africa but also throughout Southern Africa as one indivisible battlefield.

The aims that this strategy pursues are to defeat and destroy the liberation movements of Namibia, Zimbabwe and South Africa, to annihilate people's democracy in Angola and Mozambique and to impose fascist South Africa on the rest of the peoples of Southern Africa as the unchallenged neo-colonialist master.

Elsewhere in this document we deal with the form and content of this counter-offensive within South Africa. In Namibia and Zimbabwe, the white minority regimes and their imperialist allies are committed to the objective of installing neo-colonialist regimes in Salisbury and Windhoek at all costs.



Imperialism calculates that a victory of the genuine forces of liberation in Namibia and Zimbabwe would not merely signify the loss of these two countries. Such a victory would have an enormous impact in favour of the rapid advance of our own struggle in South Africa. It would further decisively improve the situation for the consolidation of people's power in Mozambique and Angola and deny the apartheid regime the bases from which it is at present carrying out acts of aggression and other forms of subversion against these two countries, as well as Zambia and Botswana. The victory of the genuine forces of liberation in Namibia and Zimbabwe would strengthen Zambia in her struggle to guarantee and inject a new content into her independence as well as serve as a material factor in the struggle of the people of Malawi to rid themselves of the yoke of neo-colonialist domination.

In short, imperialism considers that the victory of the Patriotic Front in Zimbabwe and SWAPO in Namibia would render irreversible the popular gains already achieved in Southern Africa, guarantee the imminence and certainty of an anti-imperialist solution of the South African problem and create new possibilities for the social transformation of other African countries.

To deny the peoples of Southern Africa their rightful victory, imperialism has launched a coordinated counter-offensive some of whose main elements are:

- (a) to force SWAPO and the Patriotic Front to accept negotiated settlements which would legitimise neo-colonialist solutions of the Namibian and Zimbabwe questions. Should this fail, the South African regime has already announced that it will invade Zimbabwe, as it did Angola, to seek to impose its own solution;
- (b) to intensify aggression against the front-line states and destabilise them to make it impossible for them to continue to act as reliable rear-bases of the liberation movements of Southern Africa as well as oblige them to acquiesce in the creation of client states in Namibia and Zimbabwe and in the dominant role of racist South Africa over the region as a whole;
- (c) to compel the peoples of Southern Africa to agree to a neo-colonialist order camouflaged as a so-called "constellation of states" which would cede to imperialist South Africa the right to dominate the independent countries of Southern Africa economically, politically and militarily, to use these countries in its expansionist and anti-communist crusade and to legitimise the Bantustans.

Simultaneously the apartheid regime and the world forces of reaction are searching for ways of ensuring the open military intervention of the imperialist powers to save the fascist South African regime from defeat by the rising masses of our people. For this purpose, the guise of "reformism" which we have already mentioned is being used increasingly both inside and outside South Africa to

project the criminal apartheid regime as an agent of democratic change in our country. The fascists are also engaged in a public relations exercise whereby, through apparently radical public statements promising to alter non-essential aspects of racism such as the "Immorality Act", they seek to create the illusion that they have realised the folly of their ways and are changing.

The racists and their allies believe that if they can succeed in projecting themselves thus, it would then be possible for the imperialists to come to their aid openly, without losing their positions in Africa and the rest of the world, claiming that they are defending Southern Africa from communism and from being turned into an appendage of the Soviet Union. Naturally therefore the South African regime and its friends throughout the world are intensifying their ideological offensive against the forces of liberation relying on anti-sovietism and anti-communism.

As at no other time before, the centrality of South Africa to liberation, peace and social progress in Southern Africa and Africa stands out in sharp relief, as does consequently the obligations that fall on the ANC, the SACP and our liberation movement as a whole to discharge our responsibilities both to our people and to the rest of humanity.

Through such recent victories as those scored in Nicaragua, Iran, Kampuchea and in Vietnam which repelled the Chinese invaders, by the victorious defence of Angola and Ethiopia with the direct support of the socialist community, the world anti-imperialist movement has shown that it has both the strength and will to inflict serious reverses on the forces of reaction.

Further, the camp of reaction also experiences internal contradictions. Even though these are secondary, yet they do provide scope for weakening our enemy's external support base and by no means assure the racist regime the unqualified support of its imperialist allies.

It is against this background that the enemy's plans for our country unfold. The future of its 'grand strategy' for the 80s will be influenced by the outcome of the class and national battles which continue to rage in the whole of our sub-continent. Above all it will depend upon the capacity of our liberation alliance to lead and effectively channel the revolutionary energies of the mass of our people and especially of its leading contingent — the oppressed and exploited working class.

The struggle and achievements of the decade of the 70s both inside our country and in the rest of the sub-continent have undoubtedly created foundations which, if effectively built upon, can lead to really decisive blows against the whole structure of domination and exploitation.

## **South Africa — the foundations of the 70s**

The intensity of the internal conflicts in the decade of the 70s and the experiences gained by our working class and youth have provided a new potential for the striking power of the liberation movement for the battles which face the people in the coming decade.

Although the struggles ahead will not be easy, the conditions for their unfolding have never been as favourable as they are today. Let us turn briefly to some of the foundations which were laid in the immediate past.

Already at the beginning of the decade there were significant signs that the people's fighting spirit and morale were recovering from the post-Sharpeville blows. Even before the strike movement began on any major scale our Central Committee, in December 1972, foreshadowed the events to come. We noted in our statement 'Unity is the Key':

... the attacks which were designed once and for all to destroy the people's organisations and their resolve to put an end to white domination, did not end in a permanent rout as the enemy had hoped. Once again there is evidence of significant stirrings amongst the mass of the oppressed in our land. Despite the barrier of repressive legislation which has illegalised strikes and denied the African workers the right to form trade unions more and more workers are taking matters into their own hands. The strike movement is growing in spite of punitive actions by the state and employers. The workers are becoming more confident of their strength and more experienced in struggle; organising under the very noses of the repressive forces and maintaining their unity and solidarity in open struggle.

## **The Strike Movement**

1973 saw a dramatic escalation of action by the black working class against their intensified exploitation. The spectacular 'economic boom' which began in the middle of the 60s was, as always in South Africa, built on the backs of the black labour force whose real income was daily diminishing through the uncontrollable process of inflation.

According to official figures (never very reliable when dealing with the scale of black resistance) there were over 800 strikes involving hundreds of thousands of workers between 1973 and 1976 for higher wages and better working conditions. This spurt in the scale of the strike movement is emphasised when we recall that for the whole of 1970 there were only 17 stoppages involving 665 black workers compared to the first four months of 1973 which saw 160 strikes involving over 100,000 workers.

Many of the gains such as increases in wages (which the racists claim to be a move towards reform) were won in these bitter struggles. For example, wage increases were achieved in 118 of the 160 strikes which took place in the first four



months of 1973 but not before the armed police tried unsuccessfully to beat and persecute the strikers into submission. In the mines alone, in the 17 strikes between 1972 and 1975, 42 workers were killed and another 178 were seriously injured by police brutality.

Neither was the strike movement restricted to simple wage demands; a theme which played a vital part was the struggle for trade union recognition and the very right to strike. The enemy responded by rushing the Bantu Labour Relations Regulation Amendment Act of 1973 through Parliament. Its main purpose was to pre-empt the growing demand for trade union rights by a system of works and liaison committees and to make deceptive provisions for the so-called right by Africans to strike; a 'right' which to date has not enabled the African workers to engage in a single legal strike. The failure of these measures and fear of what is to come from the black workers led to the Wiehahn Commission which, as we will see, is yet another device for destroying the growing collective bargaining strength of the black working class.

### **Political Consciousness**

Despite the fact that the strike movement of the early and middle 70s centred on working conditions and on collective bargaining rights, it is misleading to describe it as purely 'economistic'. The events showed once again that the black worker in South Africa, even when engaged in a struggle for simple economic demands, inevitably faces not only the boss but the whole state structure of race domination. The worker undeniably emerges from such struggles with a heightened experience of class exploitation and race domination; an experience which provides a basis for developing political awareness which goes far beyond pure trade union consciousness. In this sense almost every black strike in South Africa contains ingredients which transform it partly into a political action. The enemy is certainly haunted by this, as emerged clearly from the statement of the Minister of Labour soon after the Natal strikes in 1973. He said:

"The strikes in Natal are following the pattern which indicates that they are not purely connected with higher wages . . . (they are) planned actions and the strikers are being used to achieve more than just an increase in wages . . . the conduct of the workers shows that the agitation for trade union rights offers no solution and is only a smokescreen behind which there are other motives . . ."

Of even greater political significance were the three general strike demonstrations of over a quarter of a million workers following the Soweto upsurge. By the time of the third strike the migrant workers (some of whom had been organised by the police to unleash violence against the youth and workers in the earlier stay-aways) came out in active support of the demonstration. We



must remember that these stay-aways took place shortly after wage increases had been won by previous industrial action. Yet in the face of the huge unemployment figures, the workers showed themselves ready to demonstrate their resistance to tyranny even at the risk of losing their jobs and, with them, the right to remain in the urban areas.

The strike movement of the 70s involved more workers than ever before in our history. The strike experiences provided the black working class with a new confidence in its organised strength, and have equipped it more effectively for the battles ahead. Its role as the vanguard social force in our revolution was once again emphasised during this period. These persistent struggles from the early 70s onwards helped inspire the new generation of youth who began to engage in sporadic acts of resistance at their educational institutions, culminating in the great Soweto revolt. Again here, it was the collective actions of the working class which helped to transform the events into a broader protest against the whole system of oppression.

### **The spirit of Soweto lives on**

A full analysis of the Soweto events was made in our statement "The Way Forward from Soweto" (1977). But when assessing our perspectives in the coming decade one aspect merits special emphasis: despite the mass killings, jailings, torture, and bannings, the open defiance went on for years. The youth showed inventiveness, ingenuity and boundless revolutionary imagination, continuously applying varied tactics and finding new forms to maintain the pressure. Those battles have left an indelible mark on the revolutionary and political consciousness of our people. Thousands of advanced patriots amongst the new fighting generation joined the ranks of the liberation movement to prepare themselves for the more protracted struggle for power. And they are armed with the confidence, gained in struggle experience, in an inevitable people's victory.

Although not conclusive, great victories were won in the Soweto period. The attempt to impose Afrikaans at the schools was defeated. The whole system of Bantu education was paralysed over a long period of time. The urban Bantu Councils were destroyed. But these partial victories do not on their own fully explain why the people maintain a mood of defiance despite the scale of the terror which was unleashed and despite the reversal of some of these gains by subsequent enemy action.

More than ever before, the people are starting to see long-term answers whose beginnings they witnessed in the immediate post-Soweto period. There was not the leadership vacuum experienced to the same extent as in the years after Sharpeville. The strengthening of the liberation movement's internal machinery

enabled it to carry forward its basic task of political mobilisation, providing both direct and indirect leadership and guidance to the mass organisations. The heroic cadres of the liberation movement's military wing — Umkhonto we Sizwe — have continued to strike blows at the enemy and his installations. Actions like the recent Soweto police station raids electrified the masses and imbued them with confidence in the future of the struggle.

Even though the scale of confrontation has still been relatively small, the people have been encouraged by the armed actions of Umkhonto we Sizwe and regard them as a sign of greater things to come. The enemy recognises this and is preparing what it calls a 'total war strategy' in an attempt to cope with the inevitable higher level of confrontation.

Despite earlier claims by the enemy that it could nip the activities of the armed cadres in the bud, it has now admitted failure and warned its supporters that they will have to learn to live with an escalating struggle by 'ANC armed terrorists'. Hardly a week passes when the name of our liberation movement does not figure either in the speeches of Ministers, the reports in the government and opposition press, or in the debates in Parliament. The Minister of Police announced that in 1977 alone there has been an act of ANC sabotage every two weeks. By May 1978 25% of the beef farmers on the South African side of the Limpopo had abandoned their farms for fear of a guerilla presence. The 'threat' from ANC 'infiltrators' has forced the regime to meet its shortage of army personnel by recruiting black soldiers who now constitute at least 20% of its border force.

The impact of all this is not lost on the people who see these measures as a response to the intensified political and military actions of our liberation movement, especially since the Soweto events. Indeed this heightened reputation earned by the ANC and its allies has helped set the stage for growing mass involvement in the struggles ahead. Our achievements have immeasurably raised the people's expectations and this places an ever heavier burden of responsibility on every sector of our movement to meet these expectations.

### **We learn from the People**

Another important lesson of the post-Soweto period is that the people, through their own initiatives, have shown that an inexhaustible potential continues to exist in the crucial area of legal and semi-legal political organisation and mobilisation. There emerged and continues to emerge a wide variety of forms of mass organisation. Despite the inevitable harassment and bannings by the enemy, the process continues and new ways are continuously found to combine together.

Although the overall leadership of our revolution can only come from our liberation front through its effective underground presence, the combination of legal with illegal activity and even the strengthening of the underground itself demand the encouragement and creation of legal and semi-legal forms of mass organisation. Talk of mass political mobilisation without special concentration on the task is empty talk. As the recent period has shown, such organisations can play a crucial role even though some of them may not yet be prepared to stand four-square behind all our policies. Properly directed, the continuing search for new ways of combining at national, regional and local levels, provides the revolution with yet another important foundation for the battles ahead.

The experiences of the Coloured and Indian people during the decade of the 70s also open up new possibilities for bringing about a growing unity in action between the different sections of the black community. The attempt to buy off the Coloured people through the device of the Coloured Representative Council failed completely. The Labour Party's principled rejectionist tactics not only made the institution unworkable but also effectively mobilised the Coloured people against any constitutional 'solution' which denies full democratic rights for all the black people in a united South Africa. Equally, the attempt to divert the Indian people through the mechanism of the South African Indian Council has had little success. The overwhelming majority showed their utter contempt for this fraudulent device by refusing to register as 'voters', forcing the regime to make non-registration a crime. Coloured and Indian youth played an active part in the battles of the 70s and more and more of them see themselves as an integral part of the black oppressed community, increasingly questioning the continuation of the historically-rooted separation of the communal national organisations.

Even a militant minority of white youth, mainly from middle-class backgrounds, have shown extreme courage in their public commitment to the forces of national liberation. Many of them are evading conscription and when this fails are deserting from the armed forces of the enemy. Some have thrown in their lot completely with the revolutionary movement and are daily risking their lives in the national liberation struggle. This is a tendency which will grow. We must encourage and influence this development.

As we move into the 1980s we are armed with a heritage of outstanding achievements of our past struggles and with the confidence that the national and class consciousness of the people — and especially the working class and the youth — has reached a new peak of maturity. It is in order to nullify these achievements and to destroy the heightened will to struggle that the enemy is moving on all fronts to protect and reinforce the basic ingredients of apartheid



exploitation.

In the period ahead the overwhelming majority of our working people will feel the growing force of the whiplash of racism in every area of their lives. As in the past they will be forced to carry the main burden of a capitalist economy whose growth rate is continuously slowing down and which, in common with capitalist countries in every part of the world, is unable to arrest spiralling inflation. In addition, the enemy is launching what it regards as its final assault on the land rights and national cohesion of the African people and on the unity of the three black oppressed communities.

The masses will be looking to our liberation movement to lead them in struggle against this enemy offensive and to move on towards the achievement of people's power. Let us turn to an examination of the main areas of this offensive in order to equip ourselves more effectively to meet it.

### **The attack on the black working class**

It is the black working class which is the chief victim ravaged by the system and the main target of its new adjustments. The super-exploitation of the black working class is the bedrock on which the whole capitalist-racist structure rests. The primary purpose of the special coercive instruments of the system of race-capitalism and its state form has always been, in the words of our programme, to maximise the amount of 'free unpaid labour for the boss' which generates 'surplus value out of which the capitalists make their profit and accumulate their wealth'. The class responses of the workers to the system of exploitation have always presented the biggest threat to the ruling class. For it is at the point of production that collective strength asserts itself and here tribal barriers begin to break down in the shared experience of common exploitation.

The upsurge of militant labour struggles in the 40s (especially the great strike of 100,000 gold miners) was accompanied by a spurt of trade union organisation. This was one of the primary factors leading to the intensified repression of apartheid. And here the new regime acted without hesitation. It illegalised our Party in an attempt to deprive the working class of its organised political vanguard, and by a combination of naked terror and administrative and legal measures it tried to break working-class resistance. The enemy's offensive in the early 60s led to the banning of the ANC, the Rivonia arrests and the imprisonment and exile of our leaders and cadres. The current enemy offensive has precisely the same purpose. The measures it is seeking to implement are a response to the escalating national and class struggles of the 70s. At the same time it is designed to accommodate a tiny part of the black labour force in semi-skilled operations required by the increasing mechanisation

of important areas of the South African economy.

We made the point at the outset that the few 'reforms' which are now being offered to this tiny minority have little meaning for the overwhelming majority of our people; *they are in fact designed to intensify exploitation, to deepen the inferior status of the black mass and make it more permanent.* Nowhere does this purpose emerge more clearly than in the area of the black working class.

### **The Plight of the Workers**

According to the Prime Minister's economic advisory council, unemployment has risen from 200,000 in 1970 to 800,000 in 1978. But not a single analyst outside the government propaganda machine accepts these figures. The reality is even more horrific. Statistics published by Senbank, and confirmed by numerous other studies, show that the true figure for black unemployment is well beyond the 2 million mark. The South African capitalist system generates a vast stagnant pool of millions who have no prospects of ever obtaining employment. According to a recent survey, 40% of all blacks will be without employment by the year 2000. The resettlement camps in the Bantustans are the dumping grounds for this mass of the unemployed, the landless and propertyless. *For those who are still at work*, the wage increases won in the struggle of the early 70s are being steadily eroded. The meteoric rise in the cost of living continuously reduces the real earnings of the black worker and the existence of the enormous army of unemployed has resulted in a significant falling-off in wage increases.

*For those who are continuously being thrown into the pool of the jobless*, the notorious pass laws play their part with increasing ferocity. According to the Minister of Justice the number of pass arrests in 1978 increased by 36% compared to the previous year. The government has recently stated that there are over half a million 'illegal' workers in the urban areas. The only 'crime' committed by this vast slice of black humanity is the search for an honest day's labour in the land of their birth, driven to the cities by the appalling starvation conditions in the white-created reserves. *For those who have to live out their lives in this twilight zone of 'illegality'*, the hammer blow of the pass laws stands poised ready to strike as and when it suits the needs of business. Business, said the President of the Transvaal Chamber of Industries recently, is 'in favour of influx control because it protects the entire society'.

If we ignore some of its frills, the Riekert Commission has provided a new blueprint for erecting more effective laagers round the towns and instituting a system of labour control whose sophistication would have been the envy of the Nazis. Just as the 'Abolition of Passes Act' was followed by an intensified

persecution under the pass laws, so the Riekert 'reforms' (as is already clear from the government white paper) will be followed by more intense manipulation of black labour.

*For the black woman worker* the situation is even more appalling. In examining the conditions of our working class it is important to remember that one out of every three African workers is a woman (see 1970 census) and, on the average, she earns less than half an African man's wage. Over 60% of African women workers are in domestic and agricultural employment, sectors which do not even have minimum statutory wage levels or any form of unemployment insurance. Millions of African women are trapped in the Bantustans without a normal family life. Even if some of them can reach the cities they are more than ever before being hounded by the pass laws under which arrests for women increased in 1978 by over 100% when compared to the previous year. Now, under the Riekert 'reforms' it is the African women workers who constitute a big proportion of the so-called 'illegals'. Many of them, in domestic employment, are already finding themselves on the streets as a result of the stiffer penalties imposed against employers of 'illegal' workers. Even excluding this category, official figures show that close to 60% of the African unemployed in Johannesburg and the West Rand are women. Increasing numbers of Coloured and Indian women have been drawn into industry, especially in the distributive trades, the garment, clothing, textile and food processing branches during the post-Second World War period and like their African sisters are also subjected to vicious exploitation.

We will return to an examination of the Bantustans which play a decisive role in this whole process. Here we must note that for the year ending June 1978 government figures show that there were 1,336,097 'contract workers' of whom 1,016,619 came from the Transkei and Bophuthatswana. The number of 'commuters' (people who work in 'white' areas by day and sleep in the Bantustans at night) rose from 291,000 in 1970 to 725,000 in 1979. Under the new Natal Regional Development plan, the number of commuters from KwaZulu alone will double to the figure 618,000. According to F. Hartzenberg, deputy Minister for 'Cooperation and Development', eight more Sowetos will be needed by the year 2000 and the 'best place for them is in the Bantustans'. In the case of some of these commuters (e.g. KwaMashu) their new status is the result of the incorporation of their existing locations into a Bantustan by merely drawing a new line on the map. But this is far more than a technical re-arrangement. When this new line is drawn on the map, rights under section 10 of the Urban Areas Act immediately disappear and the insecurity and tyranny of the migrant labour system come into full play.



## **Skilled Work and Job Reservation**

For the mass of the black working class the recent 'concessions' in the areas of job reservation and skilled work are no compensation. Statutory job reservation had in any case died a natural death because it interfered with maximum profits. All that was left was for the Wiehahn Commission to suggest its burial.

In the case of skilled jobs for blacks, it has been the organised power of the white trade union movement, the manipulation of the closed shop, the control of apprenticeship boards, the minimum educational qualifications stipulated for artisans etc, etc, which played a major role in guaranteeing the white job monopoly. All these mechanisms remain in full force as is clear from the small print contained in the Wiehahn Commission and the government response to it. For one thing, the system has already made certain that the overwhelming majority of the black working class men and women cannot qualify to become artisans. Figures for 1970 show that 39.9% of black male urban workers have no educational qualifications whatsoever and 82% have not reached Standard VI (the Apprenticeship Act requires a minimum Standard VIII qualification). In rural areas 65.4% have no educational qualifications whatsoever and 94% are below Standard VI.

The tiny proportion of blacks who may benefit from access to skilled jobs are needed to fill in the serious shortage of skilled labour. This shortage can no longer be met from the ranks of the white working class whose members are more and more being elevated to positions as managers or supervisors of black labour or as employees in the different levels of the state apparatus. For example, in the building industry, whilst 100,000 people (mainly black) lost their jobs between 1976 and 1978, skilled labour, according to a recent meeting of the Witwaterand Master Builders and Allied Traders Association, is at its scarcest for 15 years, and the 'growing skills crisis is threatening the industry with disaster'.

But the decisive point is that in all the main branches of industry, mechanisation and new technologies are leading to a relative drop in the demand for old-style craft and artisan labour which is being replaced by the semi-skilled machine operator. The urban training projects for blacks are designed to prepare them for this type of work while the white artisan is bought off by promotion to supervisory tasks. In any case the bosses have always preferred to use semi-enslaved Africans in this category because of their vulnerability to super-exploitation.

We observed earlier that, in contrast to its earlier uncompromising positions, the white trade union movement has generally gone along with the recent limited legal measures to restructure the work force. Only that small section

which remains ideological prisoners of the past, is trying to show its teeth. The majority accept the re-arrangement because it is clear beyond doubt that not a single privilege of the white wage-earning class is being touched without being replaced at the same time by an even more attractive incentive to maintain its backing for the system as a whole.

The picture becomes even clearer when we look at the continuous widening of the gap between white and black income and the contrast between the two groups in the area of unemployment. Government figures show that in the period 1970 to 1978, whilst black unemployment rose by 9.5%, the rise in the white sector was a mere 0.6%. Statistics also show that in the first quarter of 1978 the average per capita wage increases for white workers in the mining, construction and manufacturing industries was 3.3% as against 1.6% for African workers. The gap between the earnings of white and black urban households increased from R464 in 1973 to R637 in 1978.

### **The Wiehahn Commission and Black Trade Unions**

If there is one spectre which terrifies the ruling class above all else it is the collective organization of the black workers. In the struggles of the 70s, despite conditions of virtual illegality, the unregistered black trade union movement started making significant headway once again. Especially in the last few years some of them have compelled employers to negotiate, sometimes under added pressure from the trade unions in the overseas parent companies. In general, the employers, the regime, and the majority of white trade unions have come to realise that without urgent intervention genuine black unionisation would make great strides forward.

It is therefore understandable that the Wiehahn exercise and the follow-up legislation is an attempt to stunt the growth of a genuine black trade union movement; an attempt which is so badly concealed that even the world's right-wing trade unions have seen through it. In the words of the government White Paper, the measures are designed to 'maintain peace and harmony in the field of labour' and to ward off the threat of the 'trend towards uncontrolled and disorderly development' in the black trade union field.

The African worker has long ago learnt to keep his finger on the trigger when a racist comes to bear him gifts. The gift of 'recognition', 'multi-racial unions', and the 'right to strike', is only the wrapping paper around a package containing a device which, if not disarmed, will deal a death-blow to independent black trade unionism.

The 'registration' provisions are designed to give a monopoly to unions which cut themselves off from the politics of liberation and thus accept the overall

place of the black workers in the structure of race oppression and exploitation. The other purpose of the registration provisions is to prevent unregistered unions from engaging in collective bargaining with employers.

'Multi-racial trade unions' will only be permitted at the discretion of the Minister of Labour who will undoubtedly ensure control by the white members. Doc Coertze, General Secretary of the Underground Mining Officials Association, stated recently that he was now convinced that no white man will lose his job. He went on,

'The whites needed protection in 1922 because they were unskilled. Today whites are skilled, and most blacks won't be able to compete for many years. There would only be a few of them (skilled blacks) and we're prepared to treat them as honorary whites . . . What is all the fuss about? I would rather have them in our union than in a separate one. That way we can protect our interests. *If they're in a separate union they are outside our control*'.

African workers were previously granted the 'right to strike' under the 1973 Bantu Labour Relations Regulations Amendment Act, but its restrictive provisions made it impossible in practice to pull off a single legal strike. The right to strike will now only apply to unions registered under the Industrial Conciliation Act which contains long drawn-out procedures and 'cooling off' periods designed to drain workers' militancy. In the case of the black workers the exercise of this right will be even more difficult in the light of white union domination of industrial councils and the other machineries of the Industrial Conciliation Act.

In general, the Wiehahn scheme is a Bosses' Charter and it is not surprising that it has been universally and enthusiastically welcomed by every section of industry. Apart from aiming to fill the skilled-labour gap, the ruling class falsely projects the myth that the tiny minority of Africans will gain an immediate economic benefit through entry into the white workers' preserve of skilled work, and hopes that they will act as the collaborationist buffer in the coming struggles between capital and the mass of the working people.

### **The attack on the African people as a national entity — the Bantustans**

The enemy's strategy against the black working class rests on the Bantustans. It is becoming clear beyond argument that these provide the means for fulfilling the ultimate dream of the ruling class in which, in the words of the 1923 Stallard Commission,

'the native should only be allowed to enter the urban areas, which are essentially the white man's creation, when he is willing to enter and to minister to the needs of the white man, and should depart therefrom when he ceases so to minister.'



This exactly is one of the major aims of apartheid: to institutionalise the insecurity of the large black proletariat in the industrial citadels. The speculations of the Stellenbosch professors about an all-white economy with all-white labour were never taken seriously by the ruling class intent on super-profits. The key to these is cheap black labour. To ensure its unending flow in the new conditions and at the same time to weaken the capacity of the black working class for organised class battles required that adjustments be made to the mechanism of national domination.

These adjustments require the transformation of the mass of the black urban workers into 'temporary sojourners', wanderers between the Bantustans and the towns in the rest of the country. The black man must surrender forever his claim to political and social rights and, in return, be satisfied with 'citizenship' of the rural compounds which go by the name of 'black independent states'. Already three such 'states' have been brought into existence.

Although the chief target of this policy is the black working man, its consequences are affecting the lives of every African man, woman and child in the urban and rural areas. Already over 9 million Africans have been crowded into 'homelands'; their basic food requirements, according to a government admission, can only be met if agricultural production rises by 1,000%. From the moment 'independence' is proclaimed every person who is connected with the homelands by language, culture or descent automatically loses his South African citizenship and becomes a 'foreigner'. This monstrous historical swindle is being presented to the world by the South African regime as its own contribution to 'de-colonisation'. What is happening in the Transkei, Bophuthatswana and Venda is proof of the true meaning of Bantustan independence and its consequences for the people.

*In the Transkei*, the Report on Development Strategy which was tabled in the National Assembly in April of this year tells its own story. It admits that 'one can hardly speak at present of a Transkei economy in any meaningful sense, *more properly one must call it a labour reserve*'. According to the Report the population of the Transkei will be 5 million by the year 2000 and 1.9 million will then be looking for jobs. The Transkei can only meet one-third of the food requirements of the present resident population. More than 60% of the entire male labour force works in South Africa as registered migrant workers. Only 13% of the male labour force and 4% of women and girls over 15 were in paid employment inside the Transkei. And the human toll of all this is horrific. Infant mortality among the Transkei people is 282 per thousand compared to 18.5 per thousand for whites in the rest of South Africa.

Despite the so-called break in diplomatic relations with the Transkei, the

South African treasury pays 80% of the money needed to run the Bantustan. Direct grants in 1978 amounted to R130.3 million which included a grant of R8 million from the Department of Defence for vehicles, arms and other military equipment. In addition, the administrative powers behind the scenes consist of about 400 South Africans who have been seconded to the Transkei at the cost to the South African treasury of R3.6 million.

Those who have finally sold their people's birthright by accepting 'independence' in their puppet states have already begun to accumulate some of the fruits of their betrayal. The Matanzima brothers have allocated to themselves vast stretches of land and have become participants in numerous lucrative business ventures. According to James Skinner, ex-Managing Director of the Transkei Development Corporation, corruption is rife. He alleged that millions of rand are siphoned from the Transkei Development Corporation into the pockets of Transkei politicians and TDC officials. He says further that the TDC is run 'as if it were a private company whose principal objective is to promote the welfare and prosperity of the senior management'.

*In Bophuthatswana* the story is the same. The area's most important contribution to the development of South Africa is the supply of labour to South African border industries, industrial areas and agriculture. These workers provide 46% of Bophuthatswana's gross national income.

The appeal to world capital to come to the Bantustans where they would find 'problem-free labour resources' and where they could make a 'nice fat highly profitable operation' did not fall on deaf ears. Encouraged by the regime a number of South African firms have set up their 'operations' in areas like Babalegi where workers are earning R5 a week. When taxed about this starvation wage the Director of Tiger Clothing, who runs his factory in partnership with the Bophuthatswana government, said 'we are doing a kind service by giving jobs to poor black people'.

*When Venda became 'independent'* on September 13th 1979 another half a million people, most of them in 'white' urban areas, joined the ranks of 'foreigners'. Within a day after the racist South African parliament had adopted legislation which provides for all people classified as Venda to lose their South African citizenship, Chief Patrick Mphephu spoke the deliberate lie to his people that 'the Venda government appreciates that the Venda people will not lose any of their rights and benefits in the RSA because of the fact that they have become Venda citizens'. And as compensation for the persecution and added insecurity, the Venda-speaking people have inherited a 'country' which in 1976 had 13 kms of railway line, 126 kms of tarred road and whose only industry was a single bakery!



The massive opposition to 'independence' in Venda was demonstrated in the last 'election' when the Venda Independence Party won 31 of the 42 seats on a platform of unconditional rejection of Bantustan independence. But, as happened in the Transkei in the 60s, the South African regime got its way through a so-called legislature which was packed by its own nominees. A long campaign of persecution and arrest was then launched against the elected representatives of the people who were finally bludgeoned into abandoning their mandate of no 'independence'.

### **The Rural Wilderness**

While at the top a tragic game is being played out between the regime and some of the Bantustan leaders on land consolidation, and while some of them engage in undignified begging for a few more thin slices of land under the 1936 Land Act, millions in our rural areas are suffering the same fate as the wandering Palestinians. But in the case of our people the dirty work no longer has to be done openly by Pretoria; they are being hounded into their wilderness by black collaborators in the Bantustans.

In Bophuthatswana, for example, over a million Africans whose 'crime' is that they are non-Tswana, are being chased and viciously persecuted by the Bophuthatswana administration and its police force in an attempt to uproot them from their homes and to force them to go 'to their own countries'. In Winterveldt 800,000 non-Tswanas (whose ranks have been swelled by those driven away by influx control and previous resettlement schemes) face continuous raids for permits, passes and trespass. The Bophuthatswana government has closed all private schools for these people with no alternative available. The goods of street vendors have been confiscated and their merchandise burnt. In Thaba 'nchu 15,000 'squatters' are being moved after endless persecution. In December '78 the Bophuthatswana court ordered 30,000 people to 'vanish' from Klipgat who, according to *Post*, 'disappeared after months of police persecution'. The same is happening in Stinkwater and at Boekenhoutfontein where 60,000 people with nowhere to go had been given until January 1979 to leave. 3,000 non-Tswanas at Majaneng were forced to take out Tswana citizenship after threats that their pensions would be cut off and that those at work in the Babalegi industries would lose their jobs.

The same future awaits the hundreds of thousands in Natal who are living in so-called 'black spots'. Thousands have already been deported from Charlestown and Newcastle. Plans are afoot to move thousands more from Paulpietersburg, Vryheid, Newcastle, Glencoe, Dundee, Colenso, Ladysmith, Estcourt and Mooi River. In April '79, the acting Chief Commissioner of Plural Affairs in Natal



announced that he was looking for sites to resettle 300,000 'squatters', illegal labour tenants and inhabitants of 'black spots'. Here too, the policy of absolute impoverishment of the masses is being concealed by 'concessions' to the better-off. Only those who own more than 40 morgen in 'black spots' will be given land of the same value in their Bantustans whilst their less fortunate brothers will get a site whose average size is 50 metres by 25 metres.

The effect of the Bantustans on the security and general conditions of the African resident in the urban areas thus has its counterpart in every part of rural South Africa. And in the Bantustans themselves the people's resentment is growing. In both the Transkei and Venda when people were given a voting choice, the pro-apartheid black collaborators were beaten. There has recently been an outcry against the 100% rent increase in Lebowa. Strikes of bus drivers have taken place in Bophuthatswana and the Ciskei. The mood of those being hounded in Bophuthatswana is summed up in a *Post* editorial (27.12.78),

"Thousands of non-Tswanas in Bophuthatswana are suffering so much that they *are about to go to war* against this forced independence which is bringing nobody but a few bureaucrats and the South African government joy."

The powder keg of discontent and frustration will be packed more tightly as the government moves with the greatest possible speed to bring about a situation in which, in the words of the former Plural Relations Minister, 'there will be no black South Africans'. It is clear therefore that in the coming decade the fight against the Bantustans and against the further fragmentation of our land will occupy a principal place on the agenda of our struggle. What is at stake in this struggle is nothing less than the survival of the African people as a national entity.

### **The Wooing of the Black Middle Strata**

The starting point of revolutionary strategy is an understanding of who the main enemy is and which is the principal social force and its allies on the side of the revolution. These vital definitions cannot be arrived at by abstract theorising; they must emerge from a grasp of the specific conditions in which a struggle has to be fought out. As Marxist-Leninists we say that an individual belongs to this or that class by looking at the place which he occupies in the relations of production. But we know from experience that the political behaviour of individuals or groups (that is the class position they adopt) does not, *at every moment*, correspond mechanically to the long-term economic interests of their class. The actual class positions adopted by such individuals and groups at any given moment depend also on ideological political and historical factors.

In our conditions the fight to put an end to capitalist exploitation cannot be separated from the struggle against the national tyranny. A 'class struggle' which ignores this truth can only be fought out in the classroom and not in the actual arena of struggle. The role of the different classes which make up our black community cannot be understood without a grasp of this reality. It is this reality which helps to explain why we believe that the main strategy of the present phase of our struggle is to win the aims of our national democratic revolution as a stage towards socialist transformation. Our programme stresses that the black working class stands as the vanguard social force to achieve the aims of the national democratic revolution and to ensure that it does not stop until the root cause of racial domination — capitalist exploitation — is eradicated.

Our history has shown that the broad alliance of social forces has strengthened rather than weakened the drive toward liberation. It is precisely this line-up which the enemy has recognised as posing a serious threat to its survival. And it is for this reason that it has embarked on the deliberate policy of separating a small black upper crust from the liberation movement. That this is behind some of the Wiehahn and Riekert recommendations is clear from the remarks of D.P. de Villiers, Managing Director of Nasionale Pers, in support of the entry of blacks into skilled occupations:

"Military leaders had warned that warding off insurgency was only 20% of a military exercise and 80% one of winning the hearts of the people . . . this requires action in the economic, social and political spheres."

Oppenheimer was more precise in his 1979 Witwatersrand University Chancellor's lecture where he argued for the limited admission of some blacks to white universities:

"An elitist educational system is necessary to allow blacks with abilities to fully take their place in a *white-orientated economic society* by giving them an opportunity to study in a white environment."

But it was left to Motsuenyane, President of the National African Federated Chambers of Commerce, to put the matter bluntly:

"South Africa has to produce a group of people who will be firmly involved as *partners* in the development of the South African economy."

Even some who thunder against many of the outrages of apartheid fail to distinguish between the people and the small clique of businessmen. Thus *Post* editorialised:

"They (the black businessmen) must get together and use their joint resources to initiate a real and living black economy, knowing at the end that money means power. People start respecting you as a community when they know you have money power behind you."

When we talk of the wooing of the black middle strata, whom are we thinking



of? We are thinking of a section of African, Indian and Coloured society who are neither workers nor capitalists but occupy an area in-between. It can immediately be seen that we are talking of a group which is not uniform; it includes traders, professional people, teachers and lecturers, churchmen, bureaucrats, those holding full-time political office in the state apparatus, those occupying business executive positions, etc. etc. History has shown that, in general, what we call the middle strata do not always play a consistent role in social struggles. On the one hand, their members aspire to enter the ranks of the exploiters and some of them are used as appendages of the ruling class to maintain the whole system of exploitation. On the other hand, they are often thrown back into the ranks of the working people.

When examining the black middle strata and assessing the political role which the enemy is hoping to assign to them, we must be careful to distinguish between the different elements within their ranks. In which areas is the enemy concentrating?

In the Bantustans the strategy of encouraging and co-opting a black elite has been going on in a more systematic way and over a longer period of time. In addition to immediate business incentives there are also the plums of political office and high-ranking bureaucratic posts. These, as we saw from the Afrikaner experience, provide a launching pad for participation in capitalist exploitation. The regime's agricultural policy, announced in 1973 by the Deputy Minister of Bantu Administration, is to create a small group of rich peasants by reducing the number of farmers in the Bantustans from 500,000 to 50,000. There are already clear signs that class differentiation is advancing in the Bantustans especially in those which have been dragged into 'independence'. The exact nature and extent of this class differentiation has an obvious relevance to the struggle potential of the various groups and classes and needs to be more fully researched and documented. But the broad tendencies are clear.

In the 'white' urban areas the regime is encouraging a more rapid expansion of the small business class some of whom are being incorporated into higher levels of white industry and finance. No doubt, this group will be tempted to play a collaborationist role, to become the 'responsible spokesmen' of their people and, in so far as some of them retain a connection with our liberation movement, they will attempt to steer it away from radicalism and to push it in the direction of old-style bourgeois nationalism. And we must clearly keep up our guard against this threat.

But it would be a crude and dangerous oversimplification to deny any future role on the side of the revolution for all these sections of the black middle strata. Of course, it is clear what the regime's intentions are; to tempt as many of them



as possible into collaboration through these limited economic 'concessions'. But we must not assist this process by adopting positions which will help push them right into the enemy's lap. We believe that a basis exists, and will continue to exist, for frustrating the complete fulfilment of racist strategy in this field.

In assessing the future role of those to whom 'concessions' are being offered we must be on our guard against a vulgar type of economism which has little in common with Marxism. In the reality of the South African set-up it remains true that the deprivations and humiliations of national domination will, in varying degrees, continue to be felt by every class and group within the black community.

In the case of the black business group, even the purely economic concessions will generate new conflicts between it and its well-entrenched white competitors. Already there are early signs of this. Soweto building contractors are complaining that they are being put out of business by white firms. NAFCOC has complained that 'we are in no position to compete' with the R21 million white-owned shopping complex which is being constructed on Soweto's doorstep. Riekert has recommended that the white local authorities should have the power to decide whether a member of another group can trade in its area. Even in the black areas, according to Riekert, the presence of 'the black entrepreneur will be subject to the normal requirements' of influx control. Developments in Bophuthatswana have already demonstrated that it is the very same monopoly by white capital which will dominate the heights of economic power in the Bantustans.

In general, it is clear that the ranks of white property owners, businessmen, finance, etc. etc., are *not* being opened to blacks. It is also clear that whatever concessions are made to the other sections of the black petty bourgeoisie, they will not, in many important respects, be allowed to join the ranks of their white counterparts. All that is happening is that, within the framework of continued national domination over all classes and groups which constitute the black community, some sections of the black middle strata will be allowed a little more scope for development; *but always 'along their own lines'*. In their personal lives they will continue to face most of the humiliation of inferior status, politically, socially and culturally. When the Bantustan schemes are complete all of them will become 'foreigners' in the land of their birth. The few who will be invited to share boardrooms with the white tycoons will be little more than symbolic appendages.

The small group of black skilled workers who will be permitted, in the words of Coerze, to become 'honorary whites' will undoubtedly continue to receive their share of the outrages of racial domination over *all* black people.

South African racism is indivisible. For it to continue operating, it must sooner or later show its face to every class which makes up the dominated community. For example, the Indian commercial bourgeoisie has been in existence for many years. Yet they have been taught the bitter lesson that their class position did not save them from the ghettos and other humiliations suffered by the Indian working people. If, therefore, we look at the totality of the picture, it remains true that the fate of the majority of the black middle strata is more closely connected to the black working people than to their white patrons and that the destruction of the system of national domination is in their interests.

As emphasised in our programme and in our statements of the 70s, this does not mean that the black middle strata will be as equally committed as the working class to the advance of our revolution; nor will it prevent the enemy from finding within its ranks a more fertile source of collaboration. But it does mean that the liberation movement must continue to mobilise the broadest possible contingent of black social forces against racist rule.

The enemy's latest manoeuvres to divide and rule, whether it be by means of tribal fragmentation or through the device of the admission of a few individuals to the fringes of white society, must be defeated. Those who have already sold out like the Matanzimas, Mangopes and Mphephus must feel the wrath of the people. But those (and there will be many) whose experiences of racist domination will prevent them from going the whole way with the enemy, must be encouraged to play their part in the cause of our liberation struggle whose dominant and most consistent revolutionary force is the black working class in alliance with the landless and poor peasants in the countryside.

### **The Attack on Black Unity**

One of the prime objectives of the current enemy offensive against the people is to drive a wedge between the African and the Coloured and Indian communities. Their common experience of race oppression and economic exploitation has led to active cooperation between the groups which reached one of its highest points in the mass struggles of the 50s.

At the same time, despite enemy manoeuvres to separate the Coloured and Indian people from the African, there is a growing determination and preparedness of the people to unite. The South African ruling class has always spread the slander that People's Power will lead to African domination over all other national groups. Right-wing Coloured and Indian 'nationalists' have played on this in an attempt to steer their communities away from the common liberation struggle and towards collaboration with the white power bloc. But the

people have rejected this slander and want to unite. Black unity is a fundamental aspect of unity of all democratic forces. We have already referred to the growing commitment in the 70s by Coloured and Indian youth to all-black unity, especially during the Soweto period. The jails of South Africa are testimony to the growing number of Coloured and Indian youth who have thrown in their lot with the liberation struggle side by side with their African brothers. In the ranks of Umkhonto We Sizwe they have shown a readiness to make the supreme sacrifice in pursuit of complete liberation.

This mood is reflected in the public expressions of many leaders of the mass organisations, some of whom have ignored the legal consequences of open commitment to the policies and leadership of the ANC. For example, the last Congress of the Labour Party called for a lifting of the ban on the ANC. Its newly elected president, Alan Hendrickse, announced that his party would co-operate with the ANC for 'the attainment of true freedom and liberation in South Africa'. He added, 'I am only a leader in a caretaker capacity. The time will come when we will get together with the leaders on Robben Island, in detention, and in exile.' He stressed once again that one-man-one-vote in a united South Africa was 'non-negotiable'.

It is not only these threatening signs of all black togetherness which stimulate the enemy to give urgent attention to new 'solutions' for the Coloured and Indian people. In their case there was no ready-to-hand device like the Bantustans to reinforce and institutionalise their inferior status and to 'satisfy' their urge for political rights. It is within the bounds of 'white' South Africa that the answer has to be found.

Events have already demonstrated that the Coloured and Indian people cannot so easily be fobbed off with transparent frauds like the C.R.C. and S.A.I.C. The latest model is the projected three-tier 'parliament'. It is nothing more than a mirage which gives the appearance of participation at top levels of parliamentary government. And, appearances aside, it is clearly yet another carrot dangled in front of the Coloured and Indian people to tempt them to become willing accomplices in their own race servitude. That there will be no real sharing of power was made clear by the regime's leaders who were at pains to assure all the recent Nationalist Party Congresses that the white parliament will continue to have the last say on everything.

For the fascist-oriented Nationalist Party, the proposed constitutional arrangement concentrating power in the hands of a presidential junta is also a device which will enable it further to tighten the stranglehold of the fascist clique over all aspects of national life and destroy the facade of so-called parliamentary democracy even within the limited sphere of white politics.



## **The Tasks Ahead of Us**

These then are the main ingredients of the enemy's offensive. It is an offensive which is primarily a response to a decade of greatly intensified class and national battles which threaten to erupt with heightened intensity in the coming decade. In this sense it has to be seen rather as a *counter-offensive*, a sign of an advance in the revolutionary struggle and a recognition by the enemy of its menacing potential.

In every sector of the people's lives, the raw material for raising their initiative to even higher levels is present in greater abundance than ever before. The struggle experiences of the 70s and the changes that have come about in our sub-continent, have armed our people with a greater passion for national liberation and with a growing confidence in the inevitability of their victory. Everywhere there is a sense of anticipation, anger and revolutionary fervour. As the regime's plans are put into practice and as the burden of the crisis-ridden economy is placed more and more on the shoulders of the people, the havoc in their lives will become even more terrible. And they will increasingly be looking to the ANC and its allies to show the way of struggle and to lead them towards final victory. As the new decade dawns we are called upon to be ready, as never before, to take up the challenge which faces us. What are our main tasks?

## **The Black Working Class**

The key to everything is the need to mobilise and organise the black working class, to arouse further its revolutionary consciousness and sharpen an awareness of its historic mission as the dominant force in the struggle for national liberation and the building of a socialist society.

A most intensive propaganda campaign must be launched especially at workplaces to expose the true meaning of the Wiehahn recommendations. All possible measures must be taken to reinforce and expand a genuine trade union movement which rejects all efforts to isolate the workers from the national liberation struggle. Existing black trade unions who have already taken a principled stand against registration must be encouraged. Workers must refuse to become part of the type of 'multi-racial' trade unions which would turn them into pawns of the organised white workers. This has already been the fate of some of the Coloured and Indian trade unions which were sucked into the machinery of the Industrial Conciliation Act. We must work more urgently than ever to bring about effective unity between the African, Coloured and Indian workers.

Our working class must be mobilised in a growing protest against the massive

unemployment and the ravages of influx control. The time is once again ripe for the launching of mass anti-pass resistance campaigns and for the rejection of the Bantustan 'passport' as an equally vicious substitute for the dom-pas. Especially against the background of rising prices which have virtually nullified most of the wage gains achieved in the strike movement of the 70s, we must stimulate new efforts by the workers to defend and advance their conditions of employment. As emphasised earlier, the plight of women workers is even more terrible and their mobilisation and organisation call for special efforts from our movement as a whole.

Special attention must also be paid to the task of mobilising those who work in the Bantustans where wages and working conditions are even more appalling than in the traditional industrial areas. New ways must be found both inside and outside the Bantustans to organise the millions of migrants and commuters to resist their allotted status as 'foreigners' and to demand full trade union and political rights.

### **The Bantustans**

The struggle against 'independence' occupies one of the most important sectors of the immediate battles we face. What is at stake here is whether the African people will survive as a national entity or whether they will be finally fragmented into tribal compartments competing with one another for the patronage of white capital and in the disposal of the only resource they have in abundance — cheap migrant labour power. In this connection, the tasks set out in the statement presented by Comrade Dadoo to the 1974 plenary session of our Central Committee ("South Africa — A Time of Challenge") need to be pursued with greater vigour than ever before. These are:

To reject totally any form of ideology which sees the Bantustans as enclaves of independence from which further advances can be made.

To expose those actions of the Bantustan leaders which, wittingly or unwittingly, help the enemy and to stimulate mass opposition to such policies and to those who put them forward.

To use flexible tactics in the fight to destroy the Bantustans. Depending upon the specific situation in a specific Bantustan, both the weapons of complete boycott or rejectionist participation are legitimate options. The sole test is whether this or that weapon in a given situation is the most effective to destroy the Bantustan or make it unworkable.

The battle against the Bantustans must engage the mass of the people where they live. It must not be left to the limited, and often sham, confrontations between the traditional leaders and the regime.

The consequences of Bantustan 'independence' for the people are no longer a matter of speculation. We have already referred to the millions of landless

refugees, the growing insecurity of black workers in the urban areas, the gap which is growing inside the Bantustans between the ruling elites and the impoverished mass, and the transformation of our people into 'foreigners' who must seek their political salvation in these back-yards. The continued balkanisation of our country must be resisted along the broadest possible front and with all the power at our disposal. This resistance must engage *all* classes, social groups and individuals who genuinely stand opposed to 'independence'. The seven remaining Bantustan administrations have so far committed themselves, in varying degrees, to a policy of rejecting the final step. The mass of our people, under the leadership of the liberation movement, must ensure that these commitments are honoured.

### **The Three-tier 'Parliament'**

The proposed new constitutional arrangements for the Coloured and Indian people are part of the same pattern as the Bantustans. The struggle against the three-tier 'parliament' is the struggle of all the black oppressed and not just of the separate communities immediately affected. This latest assault on black unity must become the signal for an even more effective cementing of the bonds which link every sector of South Africa's oppressed people.

As in the case of the Bantustans, the new scheme urgently poses the question of finding the most effective tactics to defeat the enemy's efforts. Obviously, the aim must be to destroy these institutions and to make them unworkable. This aim demands flexible tactics and cannot always be achieved through the unconditional adherence to a single formula. In the earlier Namibian elections we witnessed an extremely successful application of the tactic of a complete boycott of the elections. In the case of the C.R.C. the institution was made unworkable by the Labour Party's non-collaboration from within. In each case the fundamental question centres around the best way of involving the people themselves in the most effective opposition to such institutions. But unity is the key. We must ensure that the common hostility against the bogus bodies is not dissipated by purely tactical disagreements on how best to smash them.

### **The Armed Struggle and Mass Mobilisation**

The system of exploitation and oppression in South Africa cannot be defeated without revolutionary violence involving the whole people. The policy of armed struggle, the armed blows being delivered against the enemy and the steps being taken to create conditions for the entrenchment of a national liberation army in both urban and rural areas, constitute a vital part of the liberation movement's



strategy. But, as we have always stressed, it is a strategy which can only take effective shape if it is rooted in the broadest possible mobilisation and organisation of our people in mass legal and semi-legal struggles. It is politics which is in command and it is politics which determines the nature and level of armed activity at every stage.

For this reason, the build-up towards the winning of People's Power calls for an even greater emphasis in the area of strengthening the mass instruments of national, regional and local organisation amongst the people. It is only our liberation movement which can effectively guide the whole process through its underground network.

The scope for mass political activity and organisation has widened greatly as a result of the developments we have described. In our approach to such mass activity we must avoid an all-or-nothing attitude. Each and every initiative taken by groups or individuals against the regime's policies or practices must be treated as a contribution to the struggle even if, in some cases, the participants are not yet ready to accept all aspects of the liberation movement's strategy.

### **Our Party**

Our Party is a vital component of the revolutionary alliance for national liberation headed by the ANC. As such it has no interests separate from any contingent of that alliance which we have always worked to strengthen. This approach does not stand in conflict with our belief that our Party has an independent role to play not only as a constituent part of the alliance, but also as the political vanguard of the proletariat whose special historical role as the grave-digger of capitalism and the builder of socialism we have always safeguarded.

It is our duty in the coming decade to work with greater vigour than ever before:

- (a) to strengthen the whole national liberation movement
- (b) to spread the liberating ideas of Marxism-Leninism as widely as possible
- (c) to strengthen the ranks of our Party by attracting the most politically advanced activists, especially from amongst the proletariat
- (d) to spread an understanding of the connection between racial oppression and capitalist exploitation and to win mass support for the perspective of a future socialist society in South Africa
- (e) to reinforce the weapon of proletarian internationalism and to combat all forms of narrow and backward nationalism and racism

and

(f) to devote special attention to the political and trade union organisation of the working class, especially at places of work.

The SACP has a proud record of almost 60 years of dedicated struggle to the cause of the working class and the people as a whole. Communists like Kotane, Marks and Fischer are representative of a long list of our members who have become honoured symbols of the unconquerable spirit of resistance to national and class tyranny. They have helped spread the vision of a new life in our country without exploitation of man by man. On all fronts of our struggle — in the underground, in the combat units, in the trade union fields etc. — our cadres have always shown, and continue to show, the most outstanding commitment, courage and devotion to the cause of the revolution.

Both as a Party and as part of the alliance of revolutionary forces, we enter the new decade with a keen awareness of the heavy responsibilities ahead, with absolute confidence in the justness of our cause and with the certainty that our people will destroy the racist tyranny, win People's Power and move on to build a socialist South Africa.

## **APPEAL TO THE PEOPLE**

We the people of South Africa know that there is no power that can withstand our organised force.

Despite the most savage repression, we have demonstrated in action our inexhaustible capacity to develop new forms of mass struggle, uniting more and more people and extending mass action and resistance to all fronts.

Wherever we are, at all levels and in all fields — at our work places, in the urban and rural areas where we live, in the schools, universities, churches, in cultural and sports clubs — we must mobilise ourselves and confront the enemy as never before.

We must support every act of resistance and draw it into the mainstream of revolt.

### **WITH OUR UNITED STRENGTH:**

Let us in 1980, the 25th year of the Freedom Charter, build the broadest front of all patriotic and anti-racist forces under the banner of the ANC.

Let us fight the regime's labour policy; make 1980 the year of the worker; build genuine trade unions under the leadership of SACTU.

Let us isolate the enemy and its collaborators.

Let us fight for the release of all political prisoners; stand by the detained, the banned and banished; demonstrate our solidarity with those facing political trials.

Oppressed African, Coloured and Indian people unite in action.

Democratic whites, join in the struggle.

Mobilise for People's War! Support the struggle of Umkhonto we Sizwe and its combatants!

Unity and Organisation mean Victory!

Long live the SACP!

Long live the unity of the patriotic forces of our country! Death to racism and fascism — Forward to People's Power! Victory is certain!





# **LONG LIVE PROLETARIAN INTERNATIONALISM!**

*Resolution adopted at the augmented meeting of the Central Committee of the South African Communist Party in November 1979*

The revolutionary upsurge in Southern Africa in which the forces of reaction are locked in mortal combat with the forces of peace and progress is an integral part of the deepening revolutionary process taking place on a world scale. Everywhere we are witnessing a steady contraction of the frontiers of imperialism as the peoples of all continents surge forward on the road to freedom and independence, casting aside one reactionary regime after another. This century opened with capitalism firmly in control of the countries and resources of the entire globe, exploiting the labour of countless millions in both the metropolitan countries and the colonies in the interest of the tiny minority of the monopoly-capital ruling class. The vicious stranglehold of the exploiters was first broken by the great October socialist revolution of 1917, the most important landmark of this century, if not of all time. This revolution deepened the general crisis of capitalism, opened the way for the emergence of the world socialist system, the collapse of colonialism and the striking successes of the national liberation and working-class movement.

The events of the last decade further underline the thesis of our party that the main contradiction of the present era is between imperialism and socialism on a world scale; an era in which the balance of forces is inexorably changing in favour of the progressive forces. In this situation the most reactionary and aggressive circles of imperialism are desperately seeking to reverse the tide by attempting to increase world tension, poison the atmosphere of peaceful coexistence and detente by their frantic efforts to revive the cold war climate, accelerate the arms race, undermine the SALT II AGREEMENT and consequently increase the threat of a nuclear holocaust. In contrast the Soviet Union and other socialist countries have consistently undertaken initiatives for the relaxation of international tension and the achievement of world peace.

Our Party hails the signing of the SALT II AGREEMENT between the USSR and the USA and regards it as a significant step towards curbing the arms race and therefore for strengthening detente, peace and international security. We welcome the announcement made by Comrade Leonid Brezhnev that within the coming twelve months up to 20,000 Soviet troops, 1,000 tanks and a certain amount of other military equipment will be withdrawn from the territory of the German Democratic Republic. This initiative clearly constitutes a genuine measure of goodwill and a concrete and tangible desire for peace by the Soviet Union and the Warsaw Treaty member countries. Our Party further calls upon all peace-loving forces to mobilize world public opinion with a view to exerting the maximum pressure to compel the NATO powers to respond favourably to these initiatives.

The reactionary ideology of anti-communism and anti-sovietism is part of the aggressive designs of world imperialism. The logical development of anti-sovietism is most clearly seen in the Peking leadership's alliance with NATO and the most belligerent circles of US monopoly capital. Unable to defend the capitalist system, which is patently failing to overcome its inherent contradictions and satisfy the needs of humanity, the imperialists seek every opportunity to undermine and discredit the Soviet Union and the other socialist countries. Whilst bearing responsibility for the mass murder, torture and repression committed by their own forces or those of their satellites in the cause of reaction they conduct a demagogic campaign of vilification against the socialist community under the guise of concern for "human rights".

Nobody should be allowed to forget that it has been the strength and resolution of the Soviet Union and its allies which have saved not only the dream but the reality of socialism in this century, which enabled the world to survive the threat of Hitlerism, which have held back the forces of counter-revolution and war during the last 35 years. To succumb to anti-sovietism is to become a

victim of imperialist propaganda, to become detached from the world revolutionary process, to side with the enemy.

## **AFRICA**

On our continent we witness the deepening conflict between the forces of imperialism and the forces of national independence. Within the context of the general crisis of capitalism and the increasing material strength and moral force of the socialist world, the patriotic forces of our continent are scoring new victories in the struggle to break once and for all the chains of imperialism and neo-colonialism; create conditions for overcoming the deplorable colonial legacy; secure national, economic and cultural advance; and strengthen anti-imperialist solidarity with the world's progressive forces and the liberation movements engaged in the fierce battles to overthrow the last outposts of colonial and racial oppression in the South of Africa.

The dramatic change in the balance of forces that has occurred in Africa within the immediate past is highlighted most of all in the emergence of the revolutionary people's democracies of Angola, Ethiopia and Mozambique. The effect of these historic revolutionary advances is not only to be seen in the heightened momentum of struggle in Southern Africa, but in the struggle for self-determination by the people of Western Sahara under the leadership of Polisario; in the important successes being achieved by the socialist-orientated states such as Congo Brazzaville, Madagascar, Benin and Algeria; and the upsurge of patriotic mass struggles in the capitalist-orientated states.

In response to the revolutionary upsurge in our continent, the imperialists are attempting to hold back and reverse the tide of advance. As we have seen in relation to their attempts to control the situation in Southern Africa, so too on a continental scale they seek to stabilise their crumbling system of neo-colonialism by increasingly resorting to military aggression and intervention, the crudest attempts to bolster corrupt and discredited regimes, and as in Ethiopia, the encouragement of counter-revolutionary forces and the criminal aggression launched by the ruling clique in Somalia. We express our profound solidarity with the communist and other democratic forces who are being persecuted by the reactionary regimes of Egypt and Sudan.

The danger represented by the aggressive forces of imperialism must not be underestimated. In Southern Africa they are at this moment conniving with the racist Botha regime and the minority clique in power in Salisbury to hold back the forces of revolution and social change. In the rest of the continent the imperialists have in defence of their interests resorted to the most barefaced



aggression and intervention as demonstrated in Zaire, Chad, Central Africa and in their support for Morocco's expansionist designs. Nobody should be in any doubt or harbour any illusions about the determination of the racists and imperialists to utilise their vast military resources at their disposal to answer the growing challenge of the anti-imperialist movement throughout the world.

We strongly condemn the aggressive and interventionist role of not only the reactionary French government, but of NATO circles under the tutelage of US imperialism. These reactionary forces seek to form politico-military blocs with the neo-colonial regimes, who act as their chief agents and pawns, in their efforts to legitimise imperialist aggression, undermine African unity and destabilise the young progressive and revolutionary states, in order to preserve our continent as an area for their domination, exploitation and plunder.

These desperate attempts of imperialism are and will be defeated through the determined struggle and unity of the people of our continent acting in concert with the world-wide anti-imperialist forces.

## **MIDDLE EAST AND ASIA**

In the Middle East, Israel as the bridgehead of imperialism has been reinforced by Egypt through the treacherous Camp David Agreement. This reactionary alliance is designed to isolate the PLO, divide the Arab states and aggravate international tension. At the same time the growing economic, political and military alliance between the racist states of Israel and South Africa threatens the peace, security and independence of the African and Asian countries. Our Party supports the legitimate struggle of the Palestinian people under the leadership of the PLO.

We condemn the criminal acts of aggression against the people and territory of Lebanon. In these regions the revolutionary struggles have reached new levels of success by the overthrow of the tyrannical Shah regime in Iran and by the policies of socialist orientation pursued by the Democratic Republic of Yemen and by Afghanistan. We call on the anti-imperialist world to intensify their support for democratic Afghanistan which is facing a determined imperialist-inspired counter-revolutionary offensive.

We fully support the communist and workers' parties in these regions in their struggles for national and social emancipation.

We unreservedly condemn the arrests, persecution and murder of communists and democrats in Iraq.

We demand the withdrawal of the Turkish occupation forces in Cyprus and pledge our support and solidarity for an independent, sovereign and democratic Cyprus.

## **SOUTH-EAST ASIA**

The ignominious defeat of the American aggressors by heroic Vietnam was the most significant event of the last decade, marking the beginning of the end of US imperialist domination in many quarters of the world.

Under the leadership of Mao and his successors the Chinese regime has turned its back on socialism and openly allied itself with imperialism. Succumbing to the virus of chauvinism, the Chinese leadership proclaims the Soviet Union as its main enemy and as a result finds itself in conflict with the world revolutionary movement. For many years it has aided and abetted counter-revolutionary and chauvinist organisations such as the Pan-Africanist Congress of South Africa, UNITA and FNLA of Angola, and has recently been exposed as having trade and other links with racist South Africa. It applauded the murder of communists by Pinochet, Numeiry and the Shah. It supported the racist-imperialist invasion of Angola; it seeks everywhere to separate the national liberation movements from their natural allies, the socialist countries; and actively pursues a policy of domination and expansionism.

At the beginning of 1979 it committed the most criminal outrage and treachery of our time by shamelessly invading socialist Vietnam, bringing death and destruction to a long-suffering people who after 30 years of sacrifice, had finally freed themselves from the shackles of imperialism. This crime of the Chinese leadership is no accident, no aberration, but the natural outcome of anti-sovietism and anti-socialist policies within China.

The reactionary Peking leadership also conducts a hysterical campaign of aggression against Laos and Kampuchea. Together with the international community we condemn the genocidal policies and actions of the former Pol Pot and Ieng Sary clique which resulted in the death of millions of Kampuchians. We fully support the revolutionary democratic government of Heng Samrin.

## **LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN**

On the fighting continent of Latin America, Cuba is a beacon of advance. It is fulfilling the noblest principle of proletarian internationalism by its militant solidarity with the forces of national and social liberation in Africa and other countries.

As with the African continent there is a general upsurge of the anti-imperialist struggle and this is reflected in the revolutionary overthrow of the dictatorial regimes of Nicaragua and Grenada, by the progressive government of Jamaica and the intensification of the struggles for democracy and social progress in Guyana and Brazil, and against the fascist and dictatorial regimes in Chile, Paraguay and Uruguay.

We condemn the dangerous conspiracy of the imperialists to set up a South Atlantic Treaty Organization (SATO) comprising South Africa, Brazil, Argentina, Uruguay and Chile as an extension of the anti-people NATO alliance. We call upon the progressive forces in Latin America and the Caribbean and Africa to conduct a campaign to smash the growing economic, political and military links between the reactionary regimes in this region and racist South Africa. We fully support all efforts at bringing about closer cooperation and solidarity of progressive and revolutionary movements of this region and Africa.

## **THE WORLD COMMUNIST MOVEMENT**

The SACP reaffirms its unequivocal commitment to the cohesion and unity of the world communist movement and the principle of proletarian internationalism. It is precisely because the desperation of the imperialists on the one hand and the adventurism of the Chinese leadership on the other contain within them the threat of war and the destruction of all the gains to humanity since the October revolution as well as the prospect of further social advance, that the maintenance of the principle of proletarian internationalism is of cardinal significance. It is the duty of every communist party, not only to fight for social transformation in its own country, but also to strengthen its ties with the Soviet Union and the other socialist countries and to consolidate the ranks of the international communist movement. We who are part of the liberation movement of South Africa must never fail to appreciate and insist that solidarity is a two-way process, that the aid and support which the socialist countries give so generously, and at the expense of their own material gains, to freedom fighters everywhere, can only be reciprocated by unswerving identification with the socialist community in the common struggle against capitalism and imperialism. There is no room for "neutrals" in the struggle to eliminate from the world the last vestiges of colonialism and racism, to win for all peoples the right to real freedom and independence, the right to live in peace and security from the cradle to the grave.

We fully support all initiatives leading to the further strengthening of the world communist movement. In this respect we reiterate our call for an international conference of the communist and workers' parties. Over the past few years there have been regional conferences of communist parties of the countries of Africa, Arab, Latin America and the Caribbean and of Europe, which have contributed to the further strengthening of the world communist movement. We endorse the document adopted by the historic first conference of the communist and workers' parties of Tropical and Southern Africa.



## **IMPERIALIST LINKS AND INTERNATIONAL SOLIDARITY**

Our Party vehemently condemns the Western imperialist powers of the USA, Britain, France, West Germany, Italy, Belgium, Japan and Israel which, in violation of UN and OAU resolutions, maintain close and multifold links with the racist regimes of South Africa and Salisbury. It is the assistance from these countries that has equipped the police and armed forces of these murderous regimes with their modern weaponry. Direct help from the West, particularly from US, West German, French and Israeli monopolies has enabled South Africa to establish a nuclear industry. South Africa, which is now capable of producing its own nuclear weapons, poses a threat to world peace.

Fearful of the rising tide of revolution, fearful of the prospect of losing their highly profitable field of investment and strategic mineral resources, the Western countries continue to prop up the apartheid regime through their investments, trade, political and military collaboration.

We South African Communists call on all the progressive forces in Africa and the world, and we particularly appeal to the communist parties, working class, trade unions, democratic forces, students and youth of the imperialist countries to increase their invaluable solidarity actions with our struggling people and mobilise the greatest possible mass pressure on their governments and monopoly ruling circles so as to achieve the maximum possible isolation of racist South Africa and support for the SACP, ANC, Patriotic Front and SWAPO.

We express our deepest appreciation to the socialist community, the Non-Aligned Movement under the present dynamic leadership of Comrade Fidel Castro, the OAU, the Anti-Apartheid Movements and communist and progressive forces in the capitalist countries for their invaluable support for our struggle.

Despite all the dangers and conflicts which threaten us on all sides, the area of influence of our enemies has steadily contracted during the past few decades. Despite setbacks and desertions, the united front of the socialist countries, the national liberation movements and the international working class has steadily carried forward the banner of social and national revolution. The passage of each decade sees us nearer our ultimate goal, the creation of a classless society on a global scale in which the exploitation of man by man will be brought to an end and where, in the words of the *Communist Manifesto*, "the free development of each is the condition for the free development of all."

We stand firm by the tried and tested alliance which history has forged for the benefit of our cause and, armed with the ideological weapon of Marxism-Leninism, march forward in the confidence that final victory is in our grasp.

## **EDITORIAL NOTES**



# **TURNING POINTS IN OUR HISTORY**

This year marks the 25th anniversary of two key events in the history of the South African liberation movement — the foundation in March 1955 of the South African Congress of Trade Unions (SACTU), a component of the Congress Alliance and still the only genuine non-racial trade union federation on the South African scene; and the Congress of the People which adopted the Freedom Charter on June 26 of that year. In commemoration of these historic occasions, the ANC has proclaimed 1980 the Year of the Freedom Charter, while SACTU is calling for 1980 to be observed as the Year for the Mobilisation of the Workers.

The birth of SACTU and the Freedom Charter were high-water marks of the people's struggles for freedom, and we propose during the course of this year to

publish articles analysing their significance and more especially their relevance for freedom fighters today. The Freedom Charter, adopted by over 3,000 delegates from all over the country and embodying the demands of the people submitted from all centres in town and country, set out the framework of the new society for which our people have been struggling throughout this century as the only realistic alternative to the repressive apartheid state under which the mass of the people are exploited by the tiny minority of white racists. SACTU, formed as a direct result of the exclusion of African unions from the white-dominated S.A. Trade Union Council (now TUCSA), was set up by delegates from 34 trade unions representing 42,000 members who attended the inaugural conference in Johannesburg. The SACTU constitution adopted at the conference stated: "The future of the people of South Africa is in the hands of the workers. Only the working class in alliance with other progressive-minded sections of the community can build a happy life for all South Africans, free from unemployment, insecurity, poverty, racial hatred and oppression — a life of vast opportunities for all".

The fear which the Freedom Charter and SACTU inspired in the gangster rulers of our country can be measured by the frantic attempts which were made to destroy them. The Congress of the People was invaded by an army of police before its conclusion and the leading participants and Congress Alliance activists were later arraigned on a charge of high treason in a case which dragged on from 1956 to 1960. The birth of SACTU was followed by intensified persecution of its officials and those of the unions affiliated to it, most of whom were jailed, banned or driven into exile. Yet the ideas for which they lived and fought, and for which many died, are today stronger than ever, more firmly planted in the minds and hearts of the people, more dangerous to the enemies of the people.

It is not enough, however, to look back on the past with pride. If this year's anniversaries are to have any meaning, then we must accept the directives of the ANC and SACTU to turn 1980 into a year of mobilisation and intensified struggle to achieve the aims of the Freedom Charter and the SACTU constitution. The past 25 years have seen the consolidation of the authority and influence of the ANC and SACTU so that today both inside and outside the country they are accepted as the genuine representatives of the people. But they are more than spokesmen. They are also organisers and fighters. They have built Umkhonto we Sizwe and many trade unions, they have fought pitched battles with the enemy and organised a multitude of strikes for higher wages and better conditions. Internationally they have worked successfully to bring about the situation of isolation and ostracism from which the apostles of apartheid are struggling to extricate themselves.



As the struggle in southern Africa reaches new heights of intensity, the ANC and SACTU, as well as our own Communist Party, have sent out calls for the mobilisation of the people which must meet with a massive response if we are to achieve our goals. Mobilise, organise and fight — this is the only road to victory. The resolutions of the Central Committee of the SACP which we publish in this issue provide an invaluable analysis of the current situation and chart the road ahead. They deserve close study by all who love peace and freedom and want to see an end to the inhuman tyranny and oppression which has scarred our country for so long and which now threatens to plunge the whole of southern Africa into intensified conflict opening the way to a third world war.

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## **A TRAGIC LOSS FOR AFRICA AND THE WORLD**

The death of President Neto on September 10 last year was a sad loss not only for the people of Angola but for the whole progressive world. At a memorial meeting in London Dr Yusuf Dadoo, national chairman of the South African Communist Party and vice-chairman of the Revolutionary Council of the African National Congress, delivered the following address:

We have gathered here to pay our last respect and homage to the memory of Comrade Agostinho Neto — the beloved leader of the heroic Angolan people, the architect of the People's Republic of Angola — founder and first President of the MPLA-Workers' Party, a Marxist Leninist vanguard Party to guide the destiny of Angola on the socialist oriented-path for the eradication of the evil legacy of dastardly Portuguese colonialism — poverty, hunger, backwardness, illiteracy — to fight back against the sinister neo-colonialist manoeuvres of imperialism, to end the exploitation of man by man — to lead and mobilise the masses in town and country for economic advancement and social progress — for a better life for the people.

Comrade Neto possessed outstanding qualities of leadership — absolute dedication to the cause of freedom, infinite capacity for suffering and sacrifice, undeviating belief in the power of the people, ability to maintain intimate contact with the masses at all stages of the revolutionary struggle and, most importantly, a clear and scientific understanding of the revolutionary process — qualities which placed comrade Neto in the front rank of the leadership of the national and the international revolutionary movement. He knew and understood that the struggle against Portuguese colonialism in Africa was closely

interlinked with the struggle of the people of Zimbabwe, Namibia and South Africa against the racist regimes.

He knew and understood that racist South Africa constituted the bastion of imperialism in Africa which not only terrorised and exploited the black people of South Africa but also presented a grave threat to the security of the African continent and the peace of the world.

He knew the nature and inner workings of the South African racist regime. We in the African National Congress have had the honour and pleasure of working with Comrade Neto since the sixties. He was truly a staunch friend and comrade-in-arms and our movement benefited immensely from our mutual association. Comrade Neto as the President of the Angolan People's Republic was unswerving in his support for the liberation movements of Southern Africa. I recall what President Neto said in 1976:

"The liberation movements of the regions still dominated by the racists co-operated intensively with us in the tasks of liberation. Thus the ANC of South Africa, the Zimbabwean and Namibian liberation movements . . . always gave vigorous support to the MPLA. The Angolan people will not forget their international duty. We shall be unsparing in our efforts to support the struggle of our comrades in Namibia, South Africa and Zimbabwe."

Comrade Neto was an outstanding internationalist. He gave his unstinting support and the support of his movement to the freedom-fighters in Vietnam, the Middle East, Latin America, indeed, wherever the people were fighting against imperialism and colonialism and for freedom.

It was the greatness of comrade Neto that he recognised that the balance of world forces had changed radically, that imperialism was no longer the decisive force capable of ruling the roost, that the growing unity of the three mainstreams of the revolutionary process, the socialist world, the national liberation movement and the working class and progressive forces of the capitalist countries was becoming the decisive force of world politics.

Thus it was that when the very existence of the People's Republic of Angola was threatened by the invading forces of Zaire and racist South Africa with their Angolan stooges — the FNLA and UNITA — masterminded by US imperialism, President Neto and MPLA, whilst relying on the people's armed forces FAPLA and the determination of the entire heroic Angolan people for the defence of the Republic, had no hesitation in calling to their aid the internationalist military and material support of the Soviet Union and Cuba backed by the moral and material support of the progressive forces of the world.

The well-equipped racist armed forces of South Africa not only received a bloody nose on the battlefields of Angola but the myth which the racists of South

Africa had harboured in the invincibility of their armed forces was ground to the dust.

The revolutionary life of comrade Agostinho Neto is a shining example of a true revolutionary — it will forever be an inspiration to all revolutionaries, to all freedom fighters the world over engaged in a life and death struggle against imperialism, colonialism, racism and for peace, national independence, socialism and social progress.

The African National Congress and its armed wing Umkhonto we Sizwe and all the freedom fighters of South Africa extend their condolence to the Central Committee of the MPLA Workers' Party, to the government and brave people of Angola, to the armed forces FAPLA and to the family.

On our part we pledge that our people will always remain loyal to the revolutionary cause that comrade Agostinho Neto set both for the Angolan and South African people. We shall not rest until the racist regime is destroyed and people's power won.

Hamba Kahle, dear comrade, leader of all peoples fighting for national and social emancipation. We shall always cherish your poems — giving inspiration and hope to the struggling masses.

*Here are our hands  
open to the fraternity of the world  
for the future of the world  
united in certainty  
for right for concord for peace*

A Lutta Continua!

A Vittoria E Certa!

Amandla! Power to the People!

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The report presented by President Neto on behalf of the Central Committee to the first congress of the MPLA in Luanda in December 1977, together with the Theses on Education adopted by the congress, has now been issued as a booklet by the Mozambique, Angola and Guine Information Centre, 34 Percy Street, London W1P 9FG, price £1.50. The report is a brilliant summary of the history of MPLA and an explanation of the way it has triumphantly applied the principles of Marxism-Leninism in the concrete conditions of struggle and reconstruction in Angola. — Ed.



## **HONoured BY THE PROGRESSIVE WORLD**

The Central Committee of the South African Communist Party has been deeply moved by the many messages of appreciation which it received on the occasion of the 70th birthday of its chairman, Dr Yusuf Dadoo, on September 5, 1979. The messages testify to the high esteem in which the SACP and its leaders are held by the international Communist movement and the whole progressive world.

In honour of the occasion, Dr Dadoo was awarded the Order of Dimitrov by the Central Committee of the Bulgarian Communist Party and the State Council of the People's Republic of Bulgaria; the Order of Karl Marx by the Central Committee of the Socialist Unity Party of Germany and the Council of Ministers of the German Democratic Republic; the Order of the Friendship of the Peoples by the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union and the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR; the Gold Medal of the Afro-Asian People's Solidarity Organisation; the Scroll of Honour of the World Peace Council; and the Decoration of the Hungarian Peace Movement.

Messages of congratulation to Dr Dadoo and the SACP were received from the African National Congress (SA) and the SA Congress of Trade Unions, the Socialist Vanguard Party of Algeria, the Socialist Party of Australia, the Communist Party of Austria, the Communist Party of Bangladesh, the Communist Party of Belgium, the Communist Party of Brazil, the Bulgarian Communist Party, the Communist Party of Canada, the Communist Party of Chile, the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia, the Progressive Party of Working People (Akel) Cyprus, the Communist Party of Cuba, the Communist Party of Finland, the Socialist Unity Party of Germany, the German Communist Party, the Communist Party of Greece, the Communist Party of Great Britain, the People's Progressive Party of Guyana, the Communist Party of Honduras, the Hungarian Socialist Workers' Party, the Communist Party of India, the Communist Party of Indonesia, the Tudeh Party of Iran, the Iraqi Communist Party, the Communist Party of Ireland, the Communist Party of Israel, the Jordanian Communist Party, the AKFM/KDRSM of Madagascar, the Progress and Socialism Party of Morocco, the Mongolian People's Revolutionary Party, the New Zealand Socialist Unity Party, the Communist Party of the Philippines, the Polish United Workers' Party, the Communist Party of Portugal, the Communist Party of Puerto Rico, the Rumanian Communist Party, the Communist Party of El Salvador, the African Independence Party of Senegal, the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, the Communist Party of Sweden, the Communist Party of Turkey, the Communist Party of the USA, the Communist Party of Vietnam.

Messages were also received from the following national and international organisations:

M. Mainza Chona, Secretary-General, United National Independence Party of Zambia; The President of Panama in his personal capacity and as a member of the Presidential Bureau of the World Peace Council; the American Committee on Africa; the Anti-Apartheid Movement (UK); the Belgian Committee Against Colonialism and Apartheid; the Botswana Independence Party; the All-Britain Peace Liaison Group; the British Columbia Peace Council; Canadians Concerned About Southern Africa; the Colombian Peace Council; the Czechoslovak Peace Committee; the Movement of Peace, France; the Ghana Peace and Solidarity Council; the Peace Council of the German Democratic Republic; the Greek Committee for International Detente and Peace; the Peace Committee of Guadeloupe; the People's National Congress of Guyana; the Guyana Peace Council; the Hungarian Peace Movement; the All-India Peace Solidarity Organisation; the Jamaica Peace Council; the Kurdistan Democratic Party of Iraq; the Malagasy Committee for Peace and Friendship Among the Peoples; the Peace Movement of Mali; the New Communist Party (UK); the Polish Peace Committee; the Swedish Peace Committee; the Swiss Peace Committee; the Soviet Afro-Asian Solidarity Committee; the Soviet Peace Committee; E.S. Reddy, Director, United Nations Centre Against Apartheid; the Vietnam Peace Committee; the Women's International Democratic Federation; the World Federation of Democratic Youth; the World Marxist Review.

Messages were also received from many other organisations and individuals. On behalf of Dr Dadoo and the Central Committee of the South African Communist Party, we express our warmest appreciation of the fraternal solidarity demonstrated by our comrades throughout the world and assure them that our movement has been greatly encouraged and strengthened by their declarations of support.

# **KING MOSHWESHWE WHO BUILT A NATION AND BEAT THE BOERS**

**An Appreciation by Fundisi**

Moshweshwe — 'The Shaver' — is said to have given himself the name after 'shaving' a rival headman of his cattle. It's a good legend, all the better because it reveals the absence at that time of a central Sotho government, able to keep the peace and rally village communities for common action against invaders. The Sotho nation had yet to be formed when its founder was born at Menkgwaneng, his father's village, in about 1786, some thirty years before the start of the Difaqane, the period of forced migrations that resulted from Shaka's wars, which laid the foundations of the Zulu kingdom and spread turbulence in much of Southern and Central Africa.

If an 'historic mission' means a correct response to the challenge of time and place, it was Moshweshwe's mission to unite Sotho and Nguni clans and remnants of clans against Zulu impis, Boer Commandos, Christian missions, British imperialism and Cape Colonialism, all of which threatened in one way or another the survival of the young nation in the years 1830 to 1870. That he managed to keep his people together and add to their strength is testimony enough to his sagacity, military skills, political adroitness, qualities of leadership and steadfastness of aim. He remained a traditionalist by Sotho standards,



married many wives — reputedly between 140 and 200 — to cement alliances and build a large community, and refused to adopt Christianity which, according to his missionary advisers, required him to divorce all wives but one. Yet he was a statesman who read the signs aright and adjusted his thinking and strategies to the changing conditions of a world in turmoil.

He and his people did not escape unscathed from their encounters with rival chiefdoms, land-hungry Boer predators, deceitful British officials and their missionary allies. Lesotho lost most of its fertile lands to the Boers and forfeited its independence when the British annexed the territory in 1868, two years before the king died at the age of 84 in his capital on the slopes of Thaba Bosiu, Mountain of Night, from where he had repulsed many enemies and ruled his kingdom for 46 years. As against these losses, he bequeathed the legacy of national pride, fierce independence, rejection of Afrikanerdom and support for national liberation movements that have characterised the people of the mountain state to the present time.

His lifetime spanned almost all of the century that witnessed the change from the Dutch East India Company's semi-feudal, slave-owning social formation to merchant capital under British rule, the beginnings of the mineral discoveries that triggered off the scramble for Africa, and the rise of imperialist monopoly capital. Only a man of great stature and intelligence could create and maintain a nation state in the midst of such profound changes, accompanied by wars of resistance to colonial oppression, political intrigues, underhand dealings and treachery on the part of Boers, British and their underlings. Moshweshwe fought when he had to, negotiated peace when he could, played one set of claimants off against another, retreated under pressure and struck back when conditions were favourable for attack. He fought like a guerrilla leader, a freedom fighter, with courage and resourcefulness that won world-wide esteem from friends and foes alike. Our people's respect for a national hero is expressed in a sketch that appeared in 1932 in *The African Yearly Register*, edited and compiled by T. D. Mweliso Skota, the General Secretary of the African National Congress, who wrote (p. 66-67):

'Moshesh, or Moshoeshe Mokhashane, like King Tshaka, was a fine specimen of a man — tall and elegant — any artist would have gloried in having him as a model. Moshesh was not of Royal blood but by diplomacy and dexterity he installed himself as head and ruler of the Basuto Nation. He died between 1868 and 1870 after ruling many years, engaging in bloody and internecine wars, political upheavals, and other matters of organisation — which were the order of the day; he succeeded in assembling into a nation the remnants of various tribes scattered throughout the country. Moshesh was an able organiser and a diplomat and has been repeatedly acknowledged by historians. He was a man of great foresight and steady habits. Moshesh is known to

have been the only African Monarch south of the Zambesi to have repelled king Tshaka's regiments (at Thaba Bosiu). After the battle Moshesh sent Tshaka's impies thirty oxen for provisions on their way back to their own country after a fruitless invasion. Looking ahead he did not place much reliance on the assegai so therefore decided on the evangelisation of his people, and sent for missionaries from whose advice he also intended to benefit'.

If 'royal blood' refers to the lineages of kings and queens who rule over large and independent nation states, it was a rare condition in Southern Africa in the 18th century. Moshweshwe's origins were humble enough. The second son of a simple village headman, he came to manhood in traditional style, undergoing circumcision in an initiation school at the age of 18 and marrying his first wife six years later. To establish his own village was the normal procedure for a young married man, but he seems to have taken this important step at a fairly advanced age in about 1820 when he left Menkgwaneng and settled with his people eight miles away on the slopes of Botha-Bothe, a natural fortress with a flat summit on which to graze and water livestock.

An aspiring chief who built rather than inherited a power base needed to attract followers by a display of hospitality, cattle loans and food for the hungry when crops failed. He would marry many wives, linking him to potential allies and providing labour to fill the granaries with corn for food and beer. A great chief was prosperous and generous, entertaining visitors and feeding the destitute. To keep up a large establishment he needed many cattle, which could be acquired most quickly through raids on vulnerable communities. Moshweshwe's ventures were not always successful, and at times he lost heavily to rival groups; but on balance his people gained more than they lost and accumulated a surplus which attracted more followers.

## **The Difaqane**

Shaka's wars had begun two or three years before Moshweshwe founded his village at Botha-Bothe. The Zulu regiments, in yearly campaigns between 1818 and 1824, traversed the vast area between the Drakensberg and the sea, northward to within reach of Delagoa Bay and southward into Pondoland. Defeated tribes and clans were incorporated in the Zulu political structure or fled from the conquerers, upsetting other communities whom they encountered in a chain reaction. As when the Ngwane, an Nguni people who herded cattle in what is now the district of Wakkerstroom, were attacked by Dingiswayo and in turn attacked their neighbours, the Hlubi, who fled across the Drakensberg on to the inner plateau, a country inhabited by Sotho.

The Hlubi met and defeated the Tlokwa, then governed by a formidable woman, Mma-Nthatisi, who ruled as regent for her son Sekonyela. She took her



people westward, attacking a section of the Fokeng on the way, and being again harassed by the Hlubi, after which she travelled south-east to settle close to Moshweshwe's village. After an indecisive encounter, the Tlokwa besieged the mountain fortress for several months, but were forced to withdraw when attacked by one of Moshweshwe's allies. It was after this trial that he and his people, weakened by hunger but with their herds and flocks intact, transferred to Thaba Bosiu, another but stronger natural fortress. From there he would withstand attacks from the most formidable chiefdoms and Boer commandos.

Matiwane, chief of the Ngwane, attacked the fortress in 1827 but, being repulsed, withdrew to invade Thembu country. Four years later, an Ndebele army attempted to storm the mountain but were repulsed by stones and spears. It was on this occasion that Moshweshwe made the gesture that brought him wide renown: he sent the retreating warriors a gift of cattle with the message: 'Hunger brought you here; take these cattle to eat on your way and go home in peace'.

The Sotho acquired new military skills and weapons from these encounters, especially those of Korana and Griqua raiders who, deterred from entering the Transvaal by Mzilikazi's regiments, invaded Sotho country. J. D. Omer-Cooper has described the results in the following passage (*The Zulu Aftermath*, Longmans, 1966, p. 103-4):

'The number of these robbers was small but the mobility of their horses and their possession of guns made them formidable. They would swoop on Basuto villages at dawn, throwing the inhabitants into panic by firing their guns and sweep off the cattle before effective resistance could be organised. Constantly repeated attacks forced the villagers to take refuge on the mountain-tops and interfered with normal economic life. In response to these raids the Basuto organised counter-ambushes, waiting till the Grikwas fell asleep round their camp-fires and charging down on them before they could seize their arms. In this way the Basuto began to acquire considerable quantities of horses and guns and Moshesh did everything he could to increase the supply. In a remarkably short time the Basuto had bred their own "Basuto pony" and begun to convert themselves into a nation of mounted gunmen, so expert in handling their steeds that they were compared by a British officer to the Cossacks in the Crimean War'.

A community of about 25,000 people had gathered on Thaba Bosiu by the mid-thirties. Amply protected, well provided with livestock, crops and perennial streams, Moshweshwe was in a strong position to safeguard, feed and care for the starving survivors of the Difaqane wars. Chiefs who joined him retained much autonomy over their own followers, but were bound to send their soldiers to fight against external enemies or work on the king's lands. He placed his brothers and sons in charge of provinces and districts. They formed a system of family rule linking the local communities under a centralised government. By the middle of



the century, he ruled over 80,000 people, many of whom were Sotho who had fled during the time of trouble and returned to their ancestral lands when peace was restored.

Some lands were occupied by interlopers, people allowed to settle on unoccupied land according to Sotho law, which granted no more than usufructuary rights to the subjects of a chief. Among these settlers were clients of Wesleyan missionaries who came from the Vaal River valley in the north: the Rolong under Moroka who settled at Thaba Nchu, Griquas and Kora who moved to Mpokane. The newcomers, abetted by the Wesleyans, claimed the land by right of occupation or purchase. Moshweshwe rejected their contentions which were contrary to Sotho law of land tenure and the conditions of settlement; but the dispute became serious in the 1840s and later, when British officials and Boer immigrants arrived in Lesotho.

In his negotiations with these outsiders, Moshweshwe relied greatly on advice from French protestant missionaries, notably Casalis and Arbousset, whose arrival at Thaba Bosiu in 1833 coincided with the ending of the Difaqane. The missionaries, who promised peace through God's intervention, claimed the credit, and many Sotho believed them, though their faith was strained beyond the point of credulity when another brand of Christians arrived in the form of Afrikaner Voortrekkers.

In the middle of the century more than a thousand Sotho were members of a Christian church, while many more attended Sunday services. The King also attended, but refused baptism. To become a Christian he would have to renounce all his wives but one, reject traditional healing, abandon sacrifices to ancestral spirits and in other ways adopt a lifestyle alien to the great majority of his people. He allowed two of his wives who joined the church to dissolve their marriages but obliged them to stay and work at the capital as before, though they could no longer share his couch. Many of his people resented even this concession, and their resistance to the church hardened when the missionaries failed to protect them against Boer aggression and British treachery.

### **The Voortrekkers Move In**

The main reasons for the Great Trek, which involved a few hundred Boer families and their black or brown servants, were resentment against the freeing of slaves in 1834, the British policy of granting formal equality before the law to all subjects irrespective of skin colour, and the stubborn resistance of the Xhosa chiefdoms to the white invasion. The first of these wars broke out in 1779, and the Xhosa vanguard stood firm against the Boers even after they received massive reinforcements from British regular troops in 1799 and again in 1811.

The route taken by the Trekkers and the reasons for it appear in the following passage from Agar-Hamilton's essay (*The Native Policy of the Voortrekkers*, c. 1928, p.16):

'The first large body of migrant farmers left the Colony in 1836, under the leadership of Andries Hendrik Potgieter and Gerrit Maritz. The route they followed was dictated by nature on the one hand, and the Kaffirs on the other. To the north lay the dry lands that lead up to the Kalahari Desert, while to the east the country, however attractive, was the home of the warlike AmaXosa, to escape from whom was the chief motive of the Trek. They moved, therefore, in a north-easterly direction, forded the Orange near its southernmost bend and travelled slowly up the great central plain, which they found destitute of population. Their first prolonged stay was made at Thabanchu in the foothills of the Drakensbergen, where the Baralong chief Moroka, with whom was a Wesleyan missionary, Archbell, received them well, and allowed them to rest and pasture their cattle'.

Agar-Hamilton, after carefully scrutinising the contentious question of slavery in the Boer republics, concluded that some officials in the North and east of the Transvaal were clearly guilty of slave-dealing and kidnapping; that slaves were imported from Delagoa Bay and offered for sale at £15 each; that 'apprenticeship', widely practised, 'was a mere pretext for the purchase and sale of native children and was often used as a polite mask to what were really blatant slave-dealing operations' (p.192-3). Yet he too made the common white man's mistake of regarding the highveld as being 'destitute of population', a story diligently spread by the Voortrekkers and their latterday descendants, the politicians, professors and predikants, to legitimate the grotesquely uneven distribution of the land: 13 per cent for twenty million Africans, 87 per cent for less than five million whites.

Another historian, writing at about the same time, gave a different version, and one which has been amply confirmed by archaeologists, anthropologists and historians. W. M. Macmillan (*Bantu, Boer, and Briton*, 1929, p. 174) had this to say:

'So far from finding the country empty, the trekkers had their first great meeting at Thaba'Nchu, a Wesleyan mission station among Moroko's Barolong; not far off lay "remnants" of Mantatees under Sikonyela; and the first trekker capital, Winburg, was planted on land "ceded" by a chief of the Bataungs "in exchange for a troop of cattle and the promise of protection" against the Matabele. To the east, the Boers were to strive, and frequently to fight, for many years, to clear the eastern Free State of natives professing allegiance to the great Basutho chief Moshesh, who was strongly ensconced in the foothills of the Drakensberg. Even in the southern Transvaal early Trekker history is one long story of friction with native chiefs from whom the Boers obtained "title", by "treaties". The open High Veld, therefore, apart from the newly arrived Matabele, was "empty" only in the sense that its Bantu were as utterly powerless against the white man as the eighteenth-century Hottentots of the Cape Colony'.

Not 'utterly powerless', however. Even the Khoi peoples, stockbreeders and hunters, held up the advance of the Company's settlers by sustained guerrilla warfare until smallpox epidemics, introduced in 1713 and 1755 by sick passengers or crew on East Indian merchant ships, spread havoc among the clans and broke their power to resist. As Macmillan's reference to the Sotho's own resistance indicates, they too put up a long and stubborn fight and never surrendered to the Boers. How else would Lesotho have escaped incorporation in South Africa?

Having gained a foothold, as we have seen, in Moroko's Thaba Nchu, the Boers spread out, settling thickly in the south-west wedge above the confluence of the Caledon and Orange Rivers and northwards towards Winburg. Moshweshwe gave permission to graze their cattle until the Boers were ready to move on, and refused to sell the land, accept any gifts or put his mark to paper. But the Boers, practising an old deception, claimed that he had ceded the land; it was theirs for ever.

On the advice of the French missionaries, the king appealed for support to the British government at the Cape, which professed to be sympathetic to the Sotho and critical of the Boers, who remained subjects of the Crown. There followed a series of so-called treaties marking the boundaries of Lesotho: the Napier Treaty of 1843, the Maitland Treaty of 1845, the Smith Treaty of 1848 and the Warden 'lines' of 1849, each agreement representing a steady deterioration in the position accorded to the Sotho and a shrinking of their territory. As Peter Sanders noted (*Moshweshwe of Lesotho*, 1971, p. 24):

'In these ways Warden had taken away from Moshweshwe most of his good land. He had also taken away from him many thousands of his subjects, for, just as the Sotho living on the European side of the line in the south-west were now to be ruled by a British magistrate, so the Sotho living on the land which had been given to the other chiefs were now to be ruled by those chiefs. Once again Moshweshwe was deeply offended'.

### **The British Betrayal**

To appreciate Warden's role, we must look at the establishment by Sir Harry Smith, the Cape Governor and High Commissioner for South Africa, of the Orange River Sovereignty in 1848 and before that to the annexation in December 1847 of 'British Kaffraria', the ancestral homes of Xhosa-speaking chiefdoms between the Kei and Fish Rivers. The British had done what the Boers were unable to do, which was to overcome African resistance by force of superior armaments, deprive them of independence, steal their land and cattle and begin the long process of turning them into propertyless, migrant wage workers.



Smith's proclamation of February 1848 annexed to the Crown the countries of Adam Kok's Griquas, the Sotho of Moshweshwe and all other peoples inhabiting the vast region between the Orange, the Vaal and the Drakensberg. The annexation was meant, not to extend the British dominions, he declared, but for the 'protection and preservation of the just and hereditary rights of all the Native Chiefs'. That task devolved on Major Warden, a former officer of the Cape Corps, a Coloured regiment with white officers, who had been appointed British Resident to Trans-Orangia in 1845.

The Boers rebelled against the proclamation which, they complained, 'cut them off from their territory' and rose in revolt under Andries Pretorius. He advanced with a thousand men on Bloemfontein, expelled Warden from the capital, and summoned Moshweshwe to meet him there. But the king refused. Meanwhile, Smith making a forced march from Cape Town with 700 men, obtained Griqua reinforcements on the way and scattered the Boers at Boomplaats in August 1848. This defeat, according to the historiographer F. A. van Jaarsveld (*The Awakening of Afrikaner Nationalism 1868-1881*, 1961, p.29) like the previous one at Congella in Natal in 1842, 'strengthened the *idea of independence*' . . .

'After the battle of Boomplaats, everything was seen in terms of "freedom for land and nation" and "suffering for freedom". . . . Andries Pretorius gave deeper and fuller meaning to the word "freedom", when, putting it abstractly, he said that "freedom" had been given to all on earth.'

Not, however, to Africans, according to the Boers, who considered that it was the black man's destiny to accept white overlordship, surrender their lands, and labour for the master race. In contrast the British, as we have noted, promised 'protection of just and hereditary rights', but their actions had the opposite effect.

The British intentions were soon put to the test. Under pressure from the Boers in the south-west of Lesotho, the Sovereignty officials and the Cape administration drew a new boundary which deprived the Sotho of all the land claimed to have been occupied by whites at the time of annexation, no matter how many of Moshweshwe's subjects were settled there. Thus his insistence that he had never sold or ceded land to the Boers was brushed aside. Warden's plan would deprive Moshweshwe of more than a hundred villages and several thousands of Sotho subjects, including the members of his brother Posholi's village at Vechtkop, 20 miles west of the present border, yet the king acquiesced because Warden threatened to back Sekonyela, the subordinate chief of the Tlokwa who was again advancing claims to independence.

The Tlokwa attacked Thaba Bosiu early in 1849 and were again repulsed by

the king's warriors and his allies, the Taung of Chief Moletsane who between them captured a quarter of the Tlokwa herds. Some of the cattle were returned at Warden's insistence but he refused to act against the Tlokwa when they raided the Taung and captured many herds in June 1849. His remedy for these disputes was to demarcate 'Sothostans' by carving up Lesotho and granting separate chiefdoms to people whom Moshweshwe regarded as his tributaries: Sekonyela, Moroka of the Rolong, Taaibosch, the Kora chief, and even Moletsane. The raids continued, however, and Warden blamed the Sotho who, he complained, had become rich in cattle and horses, possessed more firearms than all other tribes in the Sovereignty put together, and were consequently proud and insolent towards their neighbours.

In June 1851 he set out to raise an army from white, brown and black communities in the Sovereignty, recruited 1,400 men of whom only 120 were white farmers, and attacked Viervoot mountain, occupied by Moletsane's Taung. Moshweshwe sent reinforcements who took the aggressors unawares and forced Warden to retreat to Thaba Nchu with the survivors. This defeat, in the first Sotho war against the colonialists, shocked the British, already seriously perturbed by the recent and most sustained war in the Eastern Cape, where Sandile's Ngqika aided by Khoikhoi took up arms in December 1850 against British surpemacy. When the news reached England, the Cabinet decided on a strategy of withdrawal from the Orange Sovereignty. The first step was taken when the Sand River Convention of January 1852 granted the right of self-government to the Transvaal Boers, ruled out alliances with African chiefs north of the Vaal, and undertook to allow whites, but no Africans, a right to purchase arms and ammunition from the Cape and Natal.

Assured that Britain would no longer interfere in their affairs, Moshweshwe and his people retaliated against unprovoked attacks by white farmers in the triangle between the Orange and the Caledon and by the Tlokwa, whom the Sotho raided in 1852, capturing most of their livestock. Complaints showered down on the British officials, who spoke of the need to uphold the imperial 'honour'. Sir George Cathcart, the Cape Governor, responded by leading an army of 2,000, including cavalry and artillery units, into Lesotho, where he presented an ultimatum for the delivery of 10,000 cattle and 1,000 horses within three days. Moshweshwe attempted to meet the demands, but was attacked before he could collect more than 3,500 head. This, the second British war against Lesotho, was indecisive. The British force captured about 4,500 cattle which, with those delivered by the Sotho, fell short of the number demanded. The troops withdrew with the stock under heavy attack by 5,000 mounted Sotho, armed with muskets, assegais and battle-axes. The British lost 38 men killed as

compared with 20 Sotho warriors killed, though the Sotho losses included a larger number of women and children who died in an attack on a village. Moshweshwe wrote a conciliatory letter which Cathcart gladly accepted to save face. On receiving his report, the British Government appointed a Special Commissioner to negotiate the withdrawal from the Sovereignty.

While these arrangements were pending, Moshweshwe decided in October 1853 to settle the score with his old rival Sekonyela. Addressing his army of ten to twelve thousand, he listed their grievances against the Tlokwa and said: "This is the combat you have so long demanded of me!" The attack was a great success. The Sotho stormed the enemy's mountain strongholds, swept up a great booty, and forced Sekonyela to flee with a handful of followers. The rest submitted to the king.

Sir George Clerk, the Special Commissioner, acknowledged that the Warden Line was unjust but, anxious to conciliate the white colonists, most of whom were opposed to Britain's withdrawal, told them that the Napier Treaty of 1843 had been broken by Britain's war with Moshweshwe. He then signed the Bloemfontein Convention of February 1854, transferring the government to his co-signatory whites, but making no mention of the boundary between the new Orange Free State and Lesotho. The king pressed Clerk repeatedly for a settlement of the boundary issue with the provisional government, but received no more than a letter recommending that their disputes should be settled by arbitration. Recording these events, Leonard Thompson (*Moshoeshoe of Lesotho 1786-1870*, 1975, p.169-70) notes that Moshweshwe had been a remarkably loyal ally of the British for 20 years and relied on the alliance 'to offset the increasing pressures from the white settlers . . . Now, the departure of the officials and Clerk's unilateral repudiation of British treaty obligations left him face to face with white settlers, with no agreed boundary between them'.

### **The Boers Make War on Lesotho**

Josias Hoffman, the first President of the OFS, was a friend of King Moshweshwe, who had employed him to build a house on Thaba Bosiu. Hoffman admitted that the Warden Line was unjust to the Sotho, but such fair dealing with blacks was the last thing that his burgers wanted. His opponents staged a coup, drove him from office in February 1855, and installed a typical hardliner, Jacobus Boshof. With the backing of Sir George Grey, the new Governor and High Commissioner, Boshof imposed on the Sotho the Smithfield 'agreement' of October 1855. It provided for pass regulations, procedures for recovering stolen stock, a ban on trespassing, but made no reference to a boundary between the two states.



The OFS at that time had a white population of less than 13,000, as compared with Lesotho's 100,000 inhabitants. The Sotho lived in compact villages and grew crops in addition to stockbreeding, while the Boers, thinly spread over a vast area between the Orange River and the Vaal, held titles issued by Warden's officials to farms of several thousand acres each which they used almost wholly for grazing. The whites were big stockowners as well as big landowners. In terms of *per capita* averages, the whites probably owned 'at least ten times as many horses, five times as many cattle, and twenty-five times as many small stock as the *per capita* average of Moshoeshoe's people' (Thompson, *ibid*, p. 220)

But the colonists never had enough of anything. The king knew this. He also knew from the terms of the Smithfield 'agreement' and from 'punitive' commando raids on his tributary chiefs, that Boshof was preparing to invade his territory. To prepare for the challenge, he adopted an aggressive diplomatic policy, and sent his councillors to look for allies among Xhosa, Griqua and Hlubi chiefs. But the cattle-killing strategy launched by Sarhili, the Gcaleka chief, in February 1857 ruled out the possibility of a combined offensive. Instead, Cape officials told Grey that Moshweshwe and Sarhili were conspiring to launch a war against whites throughout Southern Africa, while Boshof urged Grey to speed up the delivery of field guns ordered from England and to enforce the agreement banning the sale of arms to Lesotho.

War came in March 1858 after the Boers delivered an ultimatum calling on the king to expel his people from the frontier zone, pay compensation for alleged cattle thefts, and recognise the Warden Line as the boundary. Moshweshwe's reply, which asked for arbitration by Grey, came two days after an invasion of Lesotho by two Boer commandos in a pincer movement involving about a thousand mounted riflemen and a battery of field guns. They advanced towards Thaba Bosiu, killing and looting villages, including those of the French mission at Beersheba and Morija, while the Sotho, obeying the king's orders, refrained from a direct assault. When the Boers began their siege of the mountain fortress in May, the Sotho regiments had swept round them and were raiding border farms far and wide, seizing livestock and burning homesteads as the Boers themselves had done to the Sotho. When reports of these attacks reached the commandos, they disintegrated. The men returned to their homes, leaving Boshof to grapple with the consequences of defeat.

He appealed for help to Marthinus Pretorius and Grey. Pretorius, the Transvaal leader, said he would give assistance if the Free State united with the Transvaal, an offer which, van Jaarsveld observes (*op. cit.*, p.52), was 'not exactly a model of unselfishness and spontaneous national assertion or pure patriotism'. Grey then intervened, warning the republics that if they united he

would in effect revoke the conventions which had granted them independence.

Meanwhile, Moshweshwe had followed up his victory by sending despatches to Grey, setting out his grievances and urging him to restore Lesotho to its rightful owners, as should have been done when the British withdrew their protection. Grey offered to arbitrate, visited Bloemfontein and Thaba Bosiu and after some hesitation on the part of the king, persuaded him to accept a boundary midway between the Maitland line of 1846 and the Warden line of 1849. These arrangements were confirmed by the Aliwal North Treaty of October 1858. It deprived the Sotho of a large area around the Beersheba mission station in the south-west, restored some of the land they claimed, confirmed the northern boundary established by Warden in 1849, and gave the Boers the right to invade Lesotho without the king's permission if he failed to punish chiefs whose followers were accused of stealing stock.

The king assented with great reluctance, foreseeing conflicts over the clauses relating to the recovery of stolen stock and hunting of wild game. His major complaint, however, was over the loss of land. Grey, he said, was the fifth 'great man' to 'make matters right between me and the Boers'; but such dealings always ended by his people losing a piece of their land.

## **The Second Boer War**

The Sotho continued to cross the northern boundary (the old Warden Line) to hunt, sow and graze their stock on land that had been theirs long before the Difaqane wars and that was sparsely settled by the Boers whose farms were few and far between. Moshweshwe connived, perhaps even encouraged the movement, which he could not prevent and which he considered just, but he realised that the frequent border conflicts would inevitably escalate into a war with the Free State. His solution was to renew his requests for British protection. 'My trust has always been in the Queen', he told her son, Prince Alfred, whom he met at Aliwal North in 1860. "My prayer today is that I may be restored to the same position among the Queen's servants that I first held, for I have become as the least of them'.

Sir Philip Wodehouse, who had succeeded Grey as Governor and High Commissioner, sent officials to interview the king, then aged 76, in 1862. They told him that if Britain annexed Lesotho he and his people would be required to submit to the jurisdiction of European magistrates. The king replied that he would accept an agent, to negotiate with the Boers and help to control his people, but he did not want magistrates or laws to supersede Sotho customs without the approval of his councillors and chiefs. Wodehouse, though at first

agreeable to the idea of an agent, abandoned the project when Pretorius, the OFS president, objected.

Boundary disputes continued until Wodehouse, at the request of J. H. Brand, the newly installed President of the Free State, personally placed beacons in the disputed area. He found that several thousand Sotho families occupied land on the northern side of the Warden Line, land that the Boers claimed under grants made by Warden before the Free State came into being. Wodehouse called on the king to restore this land to 'their lawful owners' and his people complied, after a great pitso held in November 1864, where they said that the Boers wanted nothing less than to 'take the whole country and reduce the Basutos to complete subjugation'. All the chiefs said that war would come and that the earliest opportunity to fight was the best; but the king ruled against them and said that the people must be removed from their villages on the northern side of the line.

The chiefs and their people obeyed, but some were rebellious and continued to raid farms in the Free State. The Boers, wanting to avenge their defeat of 1858, urged Brand to declare war, which he did on 9 June, 1865, for the defence, he said, of homesteads and property 'and for the suppression of the arrogance and violence of the Basutos'.

Five thousand Boers went into action, aided by several thousand African allies from the Rolong of Thaba Nchu, Tlokwa and Mfengu communities, and by some hundreds of white volunteers from the Cape and Natal. The Sotho fought alone, relying on assegais, battle-axes and antiquated muzzle-loaders. They were prevented by the British Conventions of 1852 and 1854 from buying arms, whereas the Free State obtained the supplies it needed from Britain through traders in the Cape. The Sotho raided the farms, capturing large herds and flocks, but the commandos recovered these losses in Lesotho, burnt the villages and destroyed their crops thus reducing the people to starvation.

Brand had appealed on June 9th for 500 armed horsemen to M. W. Pretorius, the Transvaal President; and repeated the request sixteen days later, but this time for 1,000 men. Pretorius called for volunteers without success. Even the declaration of martial law on June 20th had no effect until it was put into strict operation in September, when the 1,000 burgers were drafted and sent under Paul Kruger across the Vaal River.

J. J. Fick, the Free State Commandant-General, had tried in vain to storm Thaba Bosiu. He joined Kruger, and the combined commando scored a success against the followers of Molapo, a son of the king and a subordinate chief, but the Free State and Transvaal Boers quarrelled bitterly over the division of the spoils. Fick wanted the combined commando to storm Thaba Bosiu and put an end to the war, but the Transvalers said they wanted to go home.



'With tears in his eyes, Paul Kruger pleaded with them to remain for one more campaign — but all to no avail. The burghers left with a prize of six cattle each, and also with the knowledge that they had won between 600 and 700 farms from the Basutos for the Transvaal'. (van Jaarsveld, *op. cit.*, p.76)

The Free Staters were outraged by the Transvalers' refusal to fight in the first place and their undisciplined withdrawal from the battlefield at a crucial stage. When the Transvaal Government asked for the farms 'they had won from the Basutos', the Free State Volksraad 'deplored' the claims. 'So big was the distrust that the Transvaal was not even informed of the outbreak of the Third Basuto War and was never asked for help again' (*ibid.*)

Unable to capture Thaba Bosiu or starve the defenders into surrender, the Free State commandos lifted the siege in September 1865, only to resume their offensive four months later, once again destroying villages, grain stores and crops, and looting large numbers of cattle and sheep. As the threat of starvation became acute, the political system of Lesotho fell apart. Individual chiefs negotiated separate peace treaties with the Boers until Moshweshwe himself and those chiefs who had remained with him to the end also capitulated by signing the Treaty of Thaba Bosiu in April 1866.

In terms of the treaties the Sotho lost two-thirds of the arable land which they held under the Convention of Aliwal North of 1858. They were left with rugged, broken mountain slopes and valleys, a mere strip of arable land around Thaba Bosiu, and only twenty miles of frontage along the Caledon River.

But they had not given up the struggle. It was their intention to take up arms again after they had recuperated and harvested their crops. Their will to resist was further strengthened by the harsh conditions that the Free State imposed: the carving up of the 'conquered territory' into 3,000 acre farms, expulsion of the French missionaries, a hut tax, pass laws sanctioned by 25 lashes or three months' imprisonment, the 'apprenticeship' of African children and influx controls, under which Lesotho subjects ran the risk of being jailed or forced to labour for a white master.

### **The Third Boer War**

The Free State did not have the administrative resources to implement these decisions. The pass laws turned out to be a paper tiger, few farms were put up for auction and fewer were actually occupied in the border area. The whites were afraid of Sotho raids. When the defiant chiefs and their people discovered this weakness, they moved back into the lands from which they had been expelled. When the Boers tried to settle on the 'conquered' lands, the Sotho harassed them.

Brand called on the commandos in March 1867 to renew the 'scorched earth' operations. Some chiefs capitulated but the majority stood firm. In June another ultimatum was issued which marked the formal beginning of the third war fought by the Free State against Lesotho.

In his reply to the ultimatum, the king accused the Boers of wishing to exterminate the Sotho nation: 'That wish has been the real cause of all the mischief of which you have written'. (Thompson *op. cit.*, p.294) He declared in a memorable passage which is no less valid today:

'Although I do not like war and am afraid of its consequent horrors, I cannot consent to buy the lives of my people with country belonging to them, where they were born, where their forefathers were born likewise; besides I know of no country where they could go'.

Rebuffed and infuriated, Brand once again mobilised the commandos and their African quislings — the Rolong, Tlokwa and Mfengu spearmen. As before, they ruthlessly destroyed villages and crops, seized livestock and spared neither children nor women. Hundreds of people, mostly the very young and old, died of starvation; thousands fled from Lesotho, into the Maloti mountains, or across the Orange, or to Matatiele in the Transkei, or to Natal. But the great majority refused to abandon their homes. They took shelter in caves and kloofs when a commando approached and emerged when it had left, to resume the cultivation of their gardens. The king, physical and spiritual centre of the nation's determination to resist, remained throughout on Thaba Bosiu, rallying his people and renewing his efforts to invoke Britain's active support.

Wodehouse, though sympathetic to the Sotho cause, was under orders from the Colonial Office to offer only mediation, 'such as can lead to no closer or entangling relationship'. The king therefore invited Natal for the third time to annex his country. For expansionist and commercial reasons, the colonists of Natal found his proposal highly agreeable and urged the administration to absorb Lesotho. The Colonial Office agreed and in December 1867 instructed Wodehouse to treat with the king for the recognition of his people as British subjects on condition that Lesotho would be incorporated in Natal and that the boundary issue would be settled with the Orange Free State.

This decision was forwarded to Moshweshwe, Brand and Keate, the Lt. Governor of Natal. The king replied that he was old and glad to know that his people would rest under the flag of England before he passed away. 'It matters little to us to know to what Colony Basutoland is to be annexed, so long as we are under British protection and rule'. (26 January 1868). But Brand, convinced that total victory was at hand, insisted on continuing the war for which, he told Wodehouse, 'the Basutos and their Chief Moshesh are alone accountable'. (3

March 1868).

Such an ignoble display of arrogance, meanness and malice stung Wodehouse into taking immediate action. He prohibited the transport of ammunition to the Free State on March 10 and two days later on 12 March 1868 proclaimed that Moshweshwe, his people and country were British. He then sent a strong body of mounted police under Sir Walter Currie to put an end to the war. Currie reached Thaba Bosiu on 26 March, read the proclamation, and persuaded the Boer commandos to stop fighting. He reported that the Sotho were very short of gunpowder, but their crops were in splendid condition and that they were still in occupation of most of the disputed land, from which the Boers could not dislodge them.

When Wodehouse visited the king in April, he found him and his councillors objecting strongly to the idea of being taken over by Natal. They would rather be a 'native reserve' under the High Commissioner or, failing that, would prefer to become a part of the Cape Colony. As for Brand, he refused to negotiate with Wodehouse and instead sent a delegation to interview the Colonial Secretary in London, with a view to inducing him to repudiate Wodehouse's arrangement and cancel the annexation. But the Government told the Boers that the arrangement made by Wodehouse was final, and that they should settle the boundary question with him.

He met the Free State's representatives at Aliwal North in February 1869, without any representative of Lesotho being present. A boundary was finally agreed upon, which allowed more land to the Sotho than that allocated by the Free State under the Treaty of Thaba Bosiu, but far less than had been set aside for them by all the previous boundary agreements or awards. The Sotho retained a very small part of the arable lands that their ancestors had occupied a century ago, before the Difaqane, and far less than the land allocated to them by Napier in 1843.

The king might well have felt that he had completed his mission. He died a year later on 11 March 1870, knowing that though the Sotho had lost most of their best lands, they would remain a nation, treading the path of unity and progress under their own government which he, King Moshweshwe, had plotted and pursued for half a century, since the days when he left Menkgwaneng to set up his own village on the slopes of Botha-Bothe.

## **The Gun War**

Yet the loss of land was a crippling blow from which the Sotho could not fully recover. A very small portion of Lesotho's area as shown on a map was inhabited. The greater part consisted of mountain, bush, precipice and rock.



Yet Brand had argued in 1868, in rejecting Wodehouse's plea for peace, that the Sotho had 'quite sufficient land'. The destitute, that is, the landless, could 'always find employment in the Orange Free State'.

And so it was to be. For the next 100 years an increasing number of men, women and children would migrate or commute between their Sotho villages and the mines, farms and factories of South Africa. From no other labour reserve do the migrants go out in greater proportions.

Land scarcities were chronic and could only deteriorate with the steady growth of human and animal populations. Neither the British nor the white dominated colonies would wish to alleviate the condition, for it was a driving force that pushed migrant workers to sell their labour to De Beers at Kimberley, mealie farmers in the Free State, and multinational corporations on the Witwatersrand. The disaster that overtook Lesotho under the Treaty of 1869 was a boon to the mine owners.

Having made the dispositions that gave them control of the diamond fields and an assured flow of migrant workers, the British were more than willing to devolve responsibility for administering so 'troublesome' a labour reserve as Lesotho threatened to be. The choice fell on the Cape Colony which received self-government in 1872 and took over Lesotho in 1871. Whether subject to Britain or the Cape, the people of Lesotho could not forego the export of their principal commodity — their capacity to labour. By 1877 a majority of the Sotho people depended on wages for an important source of income. Three out of four able-bodied men applied annually for passes to work in Kimberley, the Free State or the Cape.

Many bought guns and ammunition in a traffic for which the revenue-hungry colonies competed while deploring it on grounds of security. There was political unrest in Lesotho — as in Natal, the Cape and the Transvaal among African peoples. The colonists put the blame on the trade in arms but, as de Kiewiet observed (*The Imperial Factor in South Africa*, 1937 p.155): 'A far greater incentive to war than the possession of guns was the harsh pressure of economic circumstances upon every aspect of native life'.

Allied to the normal pressures of declining crop yields, landlessness, taxes and increased dependence on traders' goods that afflicted all the overcrowded reserves, were the effects in 1875-78 of an exceptionally severe drought. Economic distress caused restlessness and strengthened the will to resist of defiant chiefs and people. But the main reason for the wars of the period — against Sekhukhuni's Pedi in the Transvaal, 1876-79, Cetuywayo's Zulu kingdom, 1879, and the Gcaleka-Ngqika-Thembu alliance in the Eastern Cape, 1877-78 — was colonial expansionism and the imperialist determination to stamp out all forms

of independence among African peoples. Lesotho's rebellion of 1880 was part of this widespread but uncoordinated movement of resistance to imperialist aggression.

The direct cause of the Sotho War was the attempt by the Cape Government to disarm the people in terms of the Peace Preservation Act. Britain's war against the Zulu and their great victory at Isandhlwana provoked fears among the colonists of a country-wide uprising, which only complete white domination could allay. De Kiewiet has explained the connection very clearly (*ibid.*, p.263):

'The disarmament was part of the process of extending the control of the Cape Colony over all tribes and territories as far as the Natal border. To govern a large area so filled with quarrelsomeness the Cape felt that it had to have the most positive guarantees of peace. Arms in the hands of the tribes, especially in the hands of the strongest and most self-conscious tribe of them all, were an incentive to war and rebellion. South Africa, and not the Cape Colony alone, had chosen as the most important immediate aim of its native policy the complete subordination of the native population to European control. The Cape forced war on the Basuto much in the same way that war had been forced on the Zulus'.

J.G. Sprigg, the Cape premier, explained his disarmament policy to the Sotho in October 1879. They refused to give up their guns. He brushed their objections aside and turned a deaf ear to the warnings of his magistrates. Even before the Sotho had risen in actual rebellion, the Cape Mounted Rifles rode up to Lesotho. Their campaign was a futile effort to dislodge the people with their cattle from mountain crags and caves. Armed with guns, the Sotho were more than a match for the riflemen and their reluctant commando allies.

The British gave no aid, being convinced that the Cape Government had forced the war and should be left to settle it as best they could. De Kiewiet notes that 'the Basuto War was the first war since the beginning of the century in which the British Government neither fought nor paid' (*ibid.*, p. 268). Once again it was shown that the colonialists could not win wars against African chiefdoms without material backing from the imperial state.

Unable to overcome resistance, the Cape's forces retreated from Lesotho in virtual defeat. There was no chance of looting Sotho cattle or of carving up Sotho land into farms for white settlers. The Cape wanted to withdraw, and the chiefs renewed their pleas for direct supervision by the Crown. It agreed, reluctantly, and resumed authority for Lesotho in 1884, thereby preserving its territorial integrity and once again fulfilling the designs of King Moshweshwe, who chose British protection as the least of all evils.

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## **NGUGI WA THIONGO REVISITED**

# **"PETALS OF BLOOD" AS A MIRROR OF THE AFRICAN REVOLUTION**

by Ngethe Kamau

*"So this was the real gain. The only real gain. This was the thing for which poor men had fought and shouted. This was what it had come to: not that the whole thing might be overturned and ended, but that a few black men might be pushed closer to their masters, to eat some of the fat into their bellies too. That had been the entire end of it all."*

**The Beautiful Ones Are Not Yet Born** by Ayi Kwei Armah

Lenin singled out as one of the characteristic features of the epoch we are living in the struggle for national liberation of the oppressed nations against the imperialism of the oppressor nations. In this struggle for national liberation led by the bourgeoisie of the oppressed nations, it was obligatory, Lenin insisted, for all progressive forces to support the national bourgeoisie of the oppressed nations in so far as its struggle was aimed against national oppression by the oppressor imperialist nations.

Lenin warned, however, that precisely because the struggle for national liberation was led by the national bourgeoisie, the "independent" states that

would emerge and that would typify the present historical stage would be states which while "officially being politically independent" would, nevertheless, "in fact remain enmeshed in the net of financial and diplomatic dependence" on imperialism.

Lenin further warned that by virtue of the class character of the national bourgeoisie of the oppressed nations, a situation would be brought about whereby "a certain rapprochement" would be arrived at so that even "where the bourgeoisie of the oppressed countries does support the national movement, it at the same time works hand in glove with the imperialist bourgeoisie, that is, joins forces with it against all revolutionary movements and revolutionary classes."

Consequently, Lenin observed with profound prophetic insight that in the so-called "independent" countries while "the bourgeoisie of the oppressed nations *merely talks* about national revolt, in actual practice it enters into reactionary agreements with the bourgeoisie of the oppressing nations behind the backs of *and against* its own people"!

Ngugi's novel is a demonstration of the truth and validity of Lenin's penetrating analysis as applied to the post-independence state, not only in Kenya but in Africa as a whole.

Nevertheless, Ngugi is deeply conscious that imperialist finance capital is the real enemy in Africa today. As one of the characters in the novel reflects, it is because of imperialist finance capital that "a man who has never set foot on this land can sit in a New York or London office and determine what I shall eat, read, think and do, only because he sits on a heap of billions taken from the world's poor . . ."

However, in *Petals of Blood* Ngugi is essentially preoccupied with unmasking the pornographic and obscene role of the comprador class spawned and groomed by imperialism in Africa so as to play the part of intermediary, pimping for imperialist finance capital.

At one point in the novel the obscene and obnoxious role of the national bourgeoisie as the pimps of imperialism is evoked through the hallucinatory and bitter imagination of the ex-guerilla fighter, Abdulla, while the following images whirl through his mind:

"No. He was a dog panting, wet nose, and saliva flowing from a tongue thrust out. He was now yapping at the call of the master. No. He was not a dog. He was Mobutu being embraced by Nixon, and looking so happy on his mission of seeking aid, while Nixon made faces at American businessmen and paratroopers to hurry up and clear oil and gold and copper and uranium from Zaire.

He was Amin being received by the Queen after overthrowing Obote. No, he was his own donkey hee-hoo-hee-hooing and dutifully carrying any quantity of load for the master."

The novel, however, does not focus only on the puppetry of the military, political and economic elements of the national bourgeoisie. It also deals with the more subtle comprador section of the national bourgeoisie which is constituted by the products of cultural imperialism, and, especially, those of the university and intellectual elite.

### **Apologies for Imperialism**

The novel pinpoints the buffoonery, inanity, obscurantism and apologia for imperialism which characterize the scholarship of African professors and so-called educators trained in imperialist universities and other institutions of "higher learning". Hence, when the young teacher Karega tries to further advance his education he is confronted with incoherence, incomprehension and futility as he tries one area of learning after another:

"He tried political science. But here he plunged into an even greater maze. Here professors delighted in balancing weighty rounded phrases on a thin decaying line of thought, or else dwelt on statistics and mathematics of power equation. They talked about politics of poverty versus inequality of politics; traditional modernisation versus modernising tradition, or else merely gave a catalogue of how local government and central bureaucracies worked, or what this or that politician said versus what another one said. And to support all this, they quoted from several books and articles all carefully footnoted. Karèga looked in vain for anything about colonialism and imperialism: occasionally there were abstract phrases about inequality of opportunities or the ethnic balancing act of modern governments.

"Imaginative Literature was not much different: the authors described the conditions correctly: they seemed able to reflect accurately the contemporary situation of fear, oppression and deprivation: but thereafter they led him down the paths of pessimism, obscurity and mysticism: was there no way out except cynicism? Were people but helpless victims?"

It is the lawyer in the novel who, in narrating his experiences as a university student in America, illuminates for Karega what lies behind this academic zombeism and intellectual flunkeyism of the national bourgeoisie:

"When I saw in the cities of America white people also begging . . . I saw white women selling their bodies for a few dollars. In America vice is a selling commodity. I worked alongside white and black workers in a Detroit factory. We worked overtime to make a meagre living. I saw a lot of unemployment in Chicago and other cities. I was confused. So I said: let me return to my home, now that the black man has come to power. And suddenly as in a flash of lightning I saw that we were serving the same monster-god as they were in America . . . I saw the same signs, the same symptoms and even the sickness . . . and I was so frightened . . . I cried to myself: how many Kimathis must die, how many motherless children must weep, how long shall our people continue to sweat so that a few, a given few, might keep a thousand dollars in the bank of the one monster-god that for four hundred years had ravished a continent? And now I saw in the clear light of day the role that the Fraudshams of the colonial world played



to create all of us black zombies dancing pornography in Blue Hills while our people are dying of hunger, while our people cannot afford decent shelter and decent schools for their children. And we are happy, we are happy that we are called stable and civilized and intelligent . . .

"You had asked me for books written by Black Professors. I wanted you to judge for yourself. Educators, men of letters, intellectuals: these are only voices — not neutral disembodied voices — but belonging to bodies of persons, of groups, of interests. You who will seek the truth about words emitted by a voice, look first for the body behind the voice. The voice merely rationalizes the needs, whims, caprices, of its owner, the master. Better therefore to know the master in whose service the intellect is and you'll be able to properly evaluate the import and imagery of his utterances. You serve the people who struggle; or you serve those who rob the people. In a situation of the robber and the robbed, in a situation in which the old man of the sea is sitting on Sinbad, there can be no neutral history and politics. If you would learn look about you: Choose your side."

What the lawyer has discovered as a result of his experiences in America, the heartland of imperialism, is that education under imperialism is, as FRELIMO has succinctly put it, "just another institution for forming slaves."

### **Inconsistent**

Despite his critical stance towards imperialist education, however, the lawyer is, ultimately, unable to adopt a consistently anti-capitalist, or a thorough-going anti-imperialist line on account of his class allegiance as a petty bourgeois intellectual who, subsequently, opts out of the struggle. Indeed he turns out to be the embodiment and the very epitome of the petty bourgeois so vividly depicted by Marx:

"The petty bourgeois is necessarily from his position a socialist on the one side and an economist on the other; that is to say, he is dazed by the magnificence of the big bourgeoisie and has sympathy for the sufferings of the people. He is at once both bourgeois and man of the people. Deep down, in his heart he flatters himself that he is impartial and has found the right equilibrium, which claims to be something different from mediocrity . . . A petty bourgeois of this type glorifies *contradiction* because contradiction is the basis of his existence. He is himself nothing but social contradiction in action."

It is to Lenin that we must turn to be able, from a proletarian viewpoint, to situate imperialist education within the class context of the system. In his book, *Materialism And Empirio-Criticism*, Lenin categorically unmasks and gets to the class roots and origin of bourgeois scholarship whether white or black:

"Not a single one of these (bourgeois) professors, who are capable of making very valuable contributions in the special fields of chemistry, history or physics *can be trusted one iota* when it comes to philosophy. Why? For the same reason that *not a single* professor of political economy, who may be capable of very valuable contributions in the field of factual and specialized investigations, can be trusted *one*

*iota* when it comes to the general theory of political economy. For in modern society the latter is as much a *partisan* science as is *epistemology*. Taken as a whole, the professors of economics are nothing but learned salesmen of the capitalist class, while the professors of philosophy are learned salesmen of the theologians."

*Petals of Blood* as well as being primarily concerned to expose vividly, powerfully and memorably the client nature of the post-colonial state in Africa, is also concerned to depict the proletarianization of the African peasantry and the rest of the working masses of the continent. The setting of the novel not only in the country village of Ilmorog but also in the suburbs of Nairobi and on the edge of the Trans-Africa Highway delineates the theme of proletarianization which is part of the leitmotif of the novel.

The Trans-Africa Highway linking Nairobi and Ilmorog to the many cities of our continent is described as "one of the most famous highways in all the African lands, past and present."

Yet, as Lenin teaches, under imperialism, the infrastructure of roads, railways and other means of communication must be seen for what they really are: as means of gaining deeper and closer access to the natural as well as human resources of the colonial world for the purpose of the more intensified exploitation of the resources and the peoples of these countries.

Discussing the role of the infrastructure of railways in the imperialist-dominated world, Lenin wrote as follows:

"The building of railways seems to be a simple, natural, democratic, cultural and civilizing enterprise: that is what it is in the opinion of bourgeois professors, who are paid to depict capitalist slavery in bright colours, and in the opinion of petty-bourgeois philistines. But as a matter of fact the capitalist threads, which in thousands of different intercrossings bind these enterprises with private property in means of production in general, have converted this railway construction into an instrument for oppressing a *thousand million* people (in the colonies and semi-colonies), that is, more than half the population of the globe inhabiting the dependent countries, as well as the wage-slaves of capital in the civilized countries."

As Lenin wrote of the railways so also for the roads. As the inhabitants of Ilmorog watch the traffic which rolls down the new Trans-Africa Highway, it is the tankers and the heavy trucks of the multi-national monopolies that thunder past bearing such names as LONRHO, SHELL, ESSO, TOTAL, AGIP . . .

## **Dispossession**

The penetration of imperialist capital, however, takes place in compradorial alliance with the national bourgeoisie who became the new capitalist owners, not only of the town of Ilmorog but also of the former peasant lands in the neighbourhood, in the wake of the dispossession of the peasant and working masses:



"Indeed, changes did come to Ilmorog, changes that drove the old one away and ushered a new era in our lives. And nobody could tell, really tell, how it had happened, except that it had happened. Within a year or so of the New Ilmorog shopping centre being completed, wheatfields and ranches and sprung up all around the plains: the herdsmen had died or had been driven further afield into the drier parts, but a few had become workers on the wheatfields and ranches on the earth upon which they once roamed freely. The new owners, master-servants of bank power, money and cunning, came over at week-ends and drove in Landrovers or Range Rovers, depending on the current car fashion, around the farms whose running they had otherwise entrusted to paid managers. The peasants of Ilmorog had also changed. Some had somehow survived the onslaught. They could employ one or two hands on their small farms. Most of the others had joined the army of workers who had added to the growing population of the new Ilmorog. But which new Ilmorog?

"There were several Ilmorogs. One was the residential area of the farm managers, country council officials, public service officers, the managers of Barclays, Standard and African Economic Banks, and other servants of state and money power. This was called Cape Town. The other — called New Jerusalem — was a shanty town of migrant and floating workers, the unemployed, the prostitutes and small traders in tin and scrap metal."

But Ngugi does not make the mistake of that self-appointed nineteenth century sage, Proudhon, who was so deservedly castigated by Marx because he could "see in poverty nothing but poverty."

Ngugi, like Marx, can see the revolutionary side of poverty in that poverty engenders resistance, revolt and insurgency as well as the search for a way out of exploitation and misery.

The novel affirms that, indeed, the true lesson of history is that:

"The so-called victims, the downtrodden, the masses, had always struggled with spears and arrows, with their hands and songs of courage and hope to end their exploitation: that they would continue struggling until a human kingdom came: a world in which goodness and beauty and strength and courage would be seen not in how cunning one can be, not in how much power to oppress one possessed, but only in one's contribution in creating a humane world in which the inherited inventive genius of man in culture and science from all ages and climes would be not the monopoly of a few, but for the use of all, so that flowers in all their different colours would ripen and bear fruits and seeds. And the seeds would be put into the ground and they would once again sprout and flower in rain and sunshine."

Consequently, the way out of the imperialist impasse is spelt out in very clear and unequivocal terms at the end of the novel; it is the alliance of the workers and peasants under proletarian leadership:

"The system and its gods and its angels had to be fought consciously, consistently and resolutely by all the working people! From Koitalel through Kangethe to Kimathi it had been the peasants, aided by the workers, small traders and small landowners, who had mapped out the path. Leading the struggle and seizing power to overturn the system and all its prying bloodthirsty gods and gnomish angels, bringing to an end the



reign of the few over the many and the era of drinking blood and feasting on human flesh."

By way of conclusion it should be pointed out, however, that lest the national bourgeoisie of other African states, smugly and self-righteously, be pointing an accusing finger at their Kenyan counterparts, it would be as well for them to be reminded of the famous and wise words of the ancient philosopher when he said: "It is of you also that the story is told!"



# **AFRICA NOTES AND COMMENT**

by Vukani Mawethu

## **CENTRAL AFRICAN EMPIRE: THE STRUGGLE CONTINUES**

This year has been an eventful year for Africa; in the space of less than six months three tyrants fell: Idi Amin of Uganda, Macias Nguema of Equatorial Guinea and the Central African Empire's Jean Bedel Bokassa. In this article we discuss the causes and reasons that led to Bokassa's fall.

### **Economic Stagnation:**

Bokassa was never able and willing to tackle and overcome the inevitable tasks and obstacles that face a landlocked country. Bangui, the capital, has suffered from the effects of economic mismanagement for more than 10 years and the problems in the provinces were magnified. Financially the country was in such a state that aid was used to pay off foreign debts and to pay salaries of a grossly overmanned civil service which numbered over 20,000. The territory has about 2 million people. The then Prime Minister, Henri Maidou, on a visit to Paris in January 1979, said there were four main weaknesses in the economy of the country: terrible conditions of the road network; low level of the Oubangi river

on which much of the trade goes to its outlet at Pointe Noire in Congo-Brazzaville; weakness of state investment and bad management.

These problems were aggravated by the deficit in the 1978 trade balance which was reported to be 2 billion CFA francs (\$10 million) and the external debt which stood at 70 billion CFA francs. It should be remembered that in the Central African Empire (or Republic as it is again now) private investment is largely in the hands of foreigners, mainly French, and that French companies control half of the import and export business.

For years there has been no budget worthy of the name except "mini budgets" i.e. monthly assessment of the most urgently required expenditures. Money was raised on an ad hoc basis and the revenue collected was allocated on a month to month basis. The greatest hope for the Empire was uranium whose price had rocketed as a result of the oil crisis. Uranium reserves at Bakouma are estimated at 16,000 tonnes. In April 1979, France contributed an initial 360 million CFA francs for the first stage of the construction of the installations at the site. In all these transactions the French government was represented by the French Atomic Energy Commission which has a stake in the Société de l'Uranium Centrafricain along with four other partners: the Central African state; Cogenia, Alusuisse and CFMU. President Giscard d'Estaing, former director of the Caisse Centrale de Coopération Economique, is now director of the Atomic Energy Commission and his brother, Francois Giscard d'Estaing, director-general of the Banque Francaise du Commerce Exterieur, was later made by Bokassa a commander of the order of Operation Bokassa.

This corruption has had adverse repercussions on the social and economic structure of the country. On the one hand there was the personal enrichment of Bokassa and a small number of close aides at his palace in Berengo and on the other the misery of the rural people — the majority of the population. These people, under Operation Bokassa, were brought within a village framework and were made to produce goods which had little relevance to their lives. Between 1960 and 1976 the price of cotton per kilo for the producer rose from 25 CFA francs to only 50 CFA francs. Farmers did not have time to grow foodstuffs; instead they were expected to pay taxes to their village chiefs and also to the government. Both taxes swallowed up half the annual revenue of the peasant.

All this was accompanied by a steady decline in production. Diamond production fell from 500,000 carats in 1960 to less than 300,000 carats in 1978. Between 1977 and 1978 cotton production fell from 41,000 to 27,000 tonnes and coffee from 12,000 to 11,000 tonnes.

This drop in production meant a decrease in state revenue — the state is the country's principal employer as in most African countries. This again meant a



fall in living standards especially since 1970. The annual income of the peasants dropped and the wages of workers are miserably low, while the salaries of the top civil servants have not been paid regularly. The inflation rate is estimated at 135 per cent.

Talking about the peasants, it is important to note that the vast mahogany forests are undeveloped and there is less than 200 miles of paved road in the entire country, which is regarded as a refuge for wild animals.

### **Political and Social Consequences**

This decline of the economy has serious political and social consequences — the infant mortality rate is one of the worst in the world: one child in five dies before the age of one. To maintain the status quo Bokassa relied on intolerable political coercion and ferocity.

Since 1964 there have been no elections in the country and the National Assembly has not met. In order to understand this state of affairs one has to know the hierarchy of authority in the Empire. There was the Imperial Court whose composition was naturally the choice of the Emperor. The courtiers were a significant group which included at least 5 Frenchmen, an Israeli, and an Arab who advised the Emperor. The political bureau of the Mouvement pour l'Evolution Sociale de l'Afrique Noire, the only party in the country, was powerless. The General Assembly's existence was nominal and the government was appointed or dismissed by the Emperor. In short, the Emperor had absolute powers as long as he did not interfere with French interests.

We have said that terror kept Bokassa in power. His vicious reaction to demonstrations last year testifies to that. But this reaction was the tip of an iceberg revealing the internal situation in the Empire. Bokassa's main pillar was the support he received from his police — 95 per cent of whom were M'Baka, the Emperor's tribe. There was also a spy network operated by the army, the police and the secret police which created a reign of terror to the extent that members of the same family no longer trusted each other. But Bokassa mistrusted the army, a large portion of which was disarmed, except for the Imperial Guard who were at the forefront of his repression.

### **The Workers and Students**

What were Bokassa's relations with the "ordinary" people, especially the workers and students?

In the Bangui suburbs of N'Congou and Miskine there is a concentration of ethnic groups who are opposed to the favoured position of the M'Baka. It was in

these two suburbs in January 1979 that the crowds joined the students who "went on the rampage vandalising" many of the shops in the centre of the capital. It was in the two suburbs that the events (later to be called police "excesses" or "pseudo-events") in January 1979, took place. Soldiers armed with machine pistols entered the suburbs shooting inhabitants indiscriminately. They were met by a bow and arrow attack in which 100 soldiers died.

What had happened?

Bokassa's order that children should go to school in special uniforms — uniforms produced by a relative of his — started the trouble.. This was not the first time the students rebelled against him. They demonstrated in 1966, in 1973 and there was unrest in 1977 when the Emperor eventually had the student union brought under the wing of the Mouvement pour l'Evolution Sociale de l'Afrique Noire (MESAN). But this did not help. In January 1979 the outburst against the imposition of uniforms sparked off a much broader revolt: public servants, who had not received pay promised to them the previous autumn, were sympathetic. The parents of these children could not afford these uniforms — the country is among the 30 poorest in the world.

The protests and school boycotts led to street demonstrations and in April the Emperor's Rolls Royce was stoned. This was the beginning of the trouble. In mid-April the children were rounded up and whisked away, arrested during school hours, sent to military camps and police stations, flung into tiny cells by the dozen, and many of them suffocated. Those that survived were tortured, beaten and 150 of them eventually killed. The youngest victim at the central prison of Ngaragba was 11 years old. It is said that the Emperor himself was at the prison on several occasions and "almost certainly" took part in the massacre.

In May Bokassa turned up at the Kigali Summit of the Franco-African countries and denied knowledge of events in Bangui the previous month, but agreed to allow a commission of enquiry to be set up and even invited it to Bangui. That was his undoing. Lawyers from the Ivory Coast, Liberia, Togo, Ruanda and Senegal formed the commission and reported that

Security forces had atrociously put down riots in Bangui in January; troops from Zaire were involved in the suppression; 250 children, or thereabouts, were imprisoned during the January riots; the massacre was perpetrated under the orders of Bokassa "and almost certainly with his participation."

Bokassa refused to assist the commission in its inquiries and, when asked about these events, he replied that the rioting had "degenerated into a war". Instead, Bokassa executed 40 people who gave damaging evidence to an international commission of inquiry and it is said that a number of bodies have been found at the bottom of a well near the jail where he imprisoned his opponents.

## **French Involvement**

Bokassa lost his throne on September 21 1979, after 13 years of bloody rule. The French were heavily involved in organising his downfall. French troops were in Bangui "keeping law and order" within a few hours of the "rebel troops" securing the airfield and radio stations. They collected all the Imperial files and handed them over to the French embassy, thus concealing some French scandals. But they did not succeed in hiding the fact that Bokassa had received £100 million from Pretoria. This is to be found in the secret files marked: "Correspondence with the Head of State of South Africa." The extent of South African backing and involvement in the Empire is proved by the fact that one of the largest projects in the country is the construction of a large hotel complex in Bangui. South Africa is building this hotel.

David Dacko, Bokassa's relative and former president, was placed in power again. But he seems to be another dubious character. He was reported to have said on taking office that he was ready to establish diplomatic relations with South Africa, and that he intended to make the private links forged by Bokassa with South Africa official "whatever other countries said". Later he contradicted these statements.

## **Lessons**

The fate of the Central African Empire is a lesson for the whole continent. It teaches us about the dangers of neo-colonialism. The downfall of Bokassa was due to the courageous acts and activities of the students and the country's youth as a whole, who helped to overcome the people's fear.

The January uprising affected many provincial centres, and the strikes and demonstrations that continued in spite of the massacre of the children gave impetus to the sympathetic reaction of the peasants, workers and civil servants who supported the young people. It is now the task of the organised groups of the country not only to unite but to forge links with these revolutionary students and youth. The Oubangi Liberation Front (FLO), the Central African People's Liberation Front (FLPC) based in Congo-Brazzaville, the Central African People's Democratic Front and the National Union of Central African Students (UNECA) must surely be aware that the struggle continues — the enemy is not yet defeated.

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## **EQUATORIAL GUINEA — PALACE REVOLUTION?**

Equatorial Guinea became independent on October 12, 1968, after 190 years of Spanish rule. Exactly 11 years to the day after his accession to power, Francisco Macias Nguema, the former President, was shot by firing squad — 200 of them Moroccan troops — in Malabo, the capital. The trial opened on September 24.

What had gone wrong?

It is interesting that the execution was carried out in Malabo where Nguema had a residence which he scarcely left. Another residence of his was in Bata “where no foreigner went”.

Also executed with Nguema were six collaborators from his days of power. He was sentenced to death by a military tribunal, following a trial that had met with the approval of a member of the International Commission of Jurists. He was found guilty of “attempting to commit treason”, the killing of Guineans, destruction of material goods, embezzlement of public funds, genocide, mass persecution and repression.

The coup against Nguema took place on August 3, 1979. On hearing of his overthrow Nguema “ran amok” killing up to 100 people in his village. There were skirmishes before he was captured on August 13. It has been suggested that up to 500 people may have died in the fighting and that he burned down the building containing some \$60m worth of the country’s financial reserves. Were these merely symptoms of megalomania and xenophobia or was there something deeper than that?

Francisco Macias Nguema was born in 1924 in the Oyem region in Fang country. He worked in the colonial administration and it was then that he decided to choose his Spanish name after a sergeant in the Spanish army.

He was the creation of his Spanish colonial masters. He started his career as a humble orderly with the Forest Service and Public Works Department of the *sub-gobierno de Bata* and was later recommended by two of his Spanish superiors to re-sit for the fourth time the examinations that eventually made him an *emancipado* — the “emancipated” Africans who had a certain economic level enabling them to claim Spanish citizenship. He was posted as *auxiliar administrator*. He so satisfied his Spanish mentors that in 1964 he was given a senior administrative post in the colonial administration which he held until 1968 — the year he became President. In 1967 a Spanish legal expert, senior Antonio Garcia Trejivano y Forte, launched him as a political leader and he stood for the pre-independence elections — the only elections held in the country — and won. The Spanish administration regarded him as a trustworthy and willing collaborator, eager to please and easy to handle.

When he became President, Nguema became obsessed with imaginary plots to assassinate him. He suspended the constitution. Half a dozen newspapers and journals were closed down; he instituted rigid censorship and banned foreign journalists from visiting his country. More than two-thirds of the members of the first Assembly since independence have disappeared and 10 out of 12 Cabinet Ministers are now dead. His 11 years of rule were marked by fears: fears of plots against him, fears that the island of Fernando Po which was later renamed after him, Macias Nguema Biyogo, might secede. These fears led him to eliminate his political opponents or to instal in all important positions in the country his relatives or people from his ethnic group.

### Personality Cult

In order to impose his personality, besides renaming the island, he named himself "life-president, General in Chief, grand master of education, science and culture, president of the unique national workers' party and the unique miracle of Guinea". He collected for himself 45 other titles.

The slogans that emerged were characteristic:

"God created Equatorial Guinea, thanks to Macias. Without Macias Equatorial Guinea would not exist". "*No hay Dios que Macias*" (There is no other God than Macias).

Nguema pursued a vendetta with the Catholic Church. He banned it and imprisoned some priests. It should be remembered that 80 per cent of the population belonged to the Catholic Church. His intellectual shortcomings forced him to have a disdain for intellectuals who, according to him, created "all the problems of Africa." He was an admirer of Adolf Hitler.

He had two villages burned down and their inhabitants arrested for alleged "subversion" and at least 500 assassinations were executed on the orders of the ex-president. An estimated 5,000 people were being held as political prisoners and another 28,000 worked in slave labour camps.

In 1970 all political parties were banned and he established *Partido Unico Nacional* which was later renamed *Partido Unico Nacional Trabajadores* (PUNT) — the workers' only party.

The party officials quickly assumed power over and beyond the law. Much of this power was based on terror inspired by the youth section of PUNT — the Youth on the March — which was recruited mainly from the discontented teenagers at the bottom of Equatorial society. The *Comite de Base* dealing mainly with "national security" saw to it that nobody left his or her place or residence without special permission or *credencia* (credentials).

The extent of this repression can be properly appreciated when one considers that in 1978 opposition sources estimated that the population had dropped by 60 per cent.

### **Economic Situation**

Guinea has about 400,000 inhabitants and spreads over 28,051 sq. km. It is divided into two sectors: the continental zone along the Atlantic coast and Fernando Po.

Cocoa exports, once the country's mainstay, fell from 40,000 tonnes in 1968 to 4,000 in 1978. Since the departure of 20,000 Nigerian workers, brutally forced out, the cocoa plantations in Fernando Po have been worked by forced labour. Currency reserves were exhausted and the only currency which the country possessed was about US \$15m offered to Macias by Spain. After the death of Franco relations with Spain were strained, but Spain continued to provide 80 per cent of Equatorial Guinea's total imports estimated at US \$25m annually and took more than 90 per cent of her exports.

The coup that took place in Equatorial Guinea on August 3 was directed against this state of affairs. Lt. Col. Teodoro Abiang Nguema, nephew of the ousted dictator, took over and formed the Supreme Military Council. Serious problems and tasks face the new regime and it is in tackling these problems that we can judge whether what took place on August 3 was a "palace revolution" or not.





# SCIENTIFIC SOCIALISM AND FRANZ FANON

by Professor Rostislav Ulyanovsky

Talking with African friends involved in the national liberation struggle against imperialism one is aware of the influence exerted on them by Franz Fanon, one of the most outstanding African political thinkers of the late 1950s. A. V. Gordon's book *National Liberation Struggle as Reflected in the Work of Franz Fanon* recently published in the USSR is undoubtedly among the best of the hundreds of studies about Franz Fanon written in Western Europe and Africa.

In strongly recommending this book to readers I would like to give a brief political profile of Franz Fanon and attempt to relate the world outlook and struggle of this politically interesting and worthy revolutionary to the principles of scientific socialism. Franz Fanon is an outstanding ideologist of the national liberation movement and his influence is felt not only in Algeria with whose struggle for independence he had linked his life but in the whole of Africa. To some extent it is to be attributed to Fanon's charismatic personality, his dedicated service to the cause of the liberation of colonial peoples, his brilliant and impassioned writings which leave no one indifferent. It is difficult not to become imbued with sympathy for this spokesman of anti-colonialist struggle after reading Fanon's capital work, *Les Damnés de la terre* (*The Wretched of*

*the Earth*) even if one disagrees in principle with some of his conceptions. The main secret of Fanon's lasting popularity and the continued influence of his ideas lies in the fact that his works are a reflection of the historical realities and that he correctly identified the urgent problems of the anti-imperialist movement and, drawing on the experience of Algeria and the other African countries, tried to solve them in favour of the working masses.

He has been more successful in some areas than in others but the overall balance of his work is undoubtedly positive. Fanon was firmly on the side of the oppressed nations which have revealed determination to put an end to colonialism. He was an early representative of national democrats in Africa and the Arab world, i.e. the ideological and political trend in the anti-imperialist movement which has always combined militant anti-imperialism and anti-capitalist trends. Fanon's legacy, however, shows in bold relief not only the positive sides of national democracy as a revolutionary trend in anti-imperialist nationalism, but also the inherent contradictions characteristic even of its left and revolutionary wing, especially at the initial stages.

Personal sympathy and respect for Fanon need not stand in the way of an objective and critical assessment of his heritage, which is the case with all historical figures. For we cannot confine ourselves to moral and ethical judgement of them. We must concern ourselves with the actual role of Fanon's ideas in the liberation movement.

### **Imperialism Explored**

One of his major merits is his militant and consistent anti-imperialism. Fanon vividly described the essence of colonial domination as systematic suppression and violence in the political, economic and cultural fields and in everyday life. He argued that the imperialist system of exploitation must be fully and resolutely destroyed and that violence of the oppressed against the violence of the oppressors was legitimate. He called for armed struggle as the most decisive weapon against colonialism.

Fanon was among the first ideologists of the African national liberation movement to understand the historical limitations of nationalism as a banner of anti-imperialist struggle. He rejected the road of national liberation movement which until the end of World War II was regarded as the unquestionable and absolute way by all bourgeois ideologists and scholars, viz., the road whereby the anti-imperialist struggle brought the national bourgeoisie to power, and political independence created conditions for rapid and unimpeded development of local capitalism. Fanon proclaimed that the capitalist road was

not obligatory for Africa and even impossible in African countries. He argued that the emergence of African capitalism should be prevented, that national capital should not be allowed to seize hegemony and form a political party claiming leadership of national life. Fanon advocated a road predicted by Lenin who said that having started by anti-imperialism the colonial peoples would then turn against capitalism. Fanon became conscious of the dangers of the narrowly egoistic bourgeois nationalism and believed that it should be invested with social content, the ideas of social justice and equality, democracy and, to a certain extent, internationalism, for anti-colonial struggle to be brought to a successful conclusion. He advocated a national consciousness that did not evolve into nationalism and chauvinism which he opposed.

Characteristically, Fanon did not advance socialist slogans, which was probably his weakness. In this Fanon was guided by different considerations; it may be that he was not enthusiastic about what was being done under socialist slogans in some African countries; he believed wrongly that adoption of socialism would have meant the borrowing of ideas and experience allegedly alien to Africa, which had to produce its own ideals. Behind it all was a vague awareness that most African peoples were unprepared for tackling the construction of socialism, that an intermediate stage was needed for bourgeois nationalism to be superseded by a national consciousness expressing the interests of the working people and for the selfish claims of the exploitative elements to be curbed.

Credit is also due to Fanon for his critique of bourgeois and bureaucratic tendencies in the young African states from a revolutionary-democratic angle. On this issue Fanon is at times one-sided and too categorical, which is his feature in general. Thus, he rejected in principle the one-party system for Africa identifying it with the simplest and most overt form of bourgeois dictatorship and thereby ruling out the use of the one-party system in the interests of revolutionary forces. On the whole, however, his criticism of bureaucratic degeneration, the use of mass organisations as a cover for autocratic rule, corruption, bourgeois money-grabbing, hypocrisy, etc., and the rejection of the theory of "tutelage" of the popular masses drew attention to the real evils of young African statehood which thrive in the conditions of post-colonialism and unfortunately affect, not only reactionary and reformist, but also — and to no small extent — the progressive and revolutionary regimes. Fanon's conception of democracy aimed at preserving and fostering the political activity and initiative of the masses generated in the course of the anti-imperialist struggle deserves to be closely studied and implemented.

The merits of Fanon's platform are the reverse side of its demerits. They stem



above all from lack of a dialectical approach to the phenomena he considers. Fanon has stopped just short of Marxism, but he has not become a Marxist. His approach is metaphysical, and not materialist or dialectical.

Fanon hails revolutionary violence of the oppressed in the form of armed struggle, which seems a sound thing to do. However, he makes an absolute of the armed methods proclaiming them to be the sole way to ensuring genuine independence, which leads him to gross errors.

### **Armed Struggle**

A conscious revolutionary chooses the armed form of struggle after a thorough analysis of the political situation, the alignment of class and political forces, the sentiments of the masses, the probability of open resistance, etc. According to Fanon, however, violence comes from intuition and not as a result of reflection and conscious choice, and flows not so much from socio-political as socio-psychological, anthropological and even psycho-physiological factors. It is an instinctive and spontaneous act and not the result of a political choice of a method of revolutionary struggle that is the most suitable at a specific juncture.

Fanon's absolutisation of violence goes even further. For him it is not just a method and not even *the* method. He proclaims it to be a value in its own right equating it to revolution. Fanon believes that it would emancipate the masses politically and spiritually and would provide a safeguard against bureaucratic perversions of the party and government system in the young states for which he had such a keen eye. One need hardly go to any lengths to argue that armed struggle alone, in whatever form and on whatever scale, cannot ensure all these things and that its success in preserving the revolutionary and democratic regime depends on the political situation, the level of political consciousness, the political staunchness and broad involvement of the masses even when they are waging it. Armed struggle is not an end in itself, still less a panacea against counter-revolution and reaction. This is corroborated, among other things, by the experience of Algeria after Fanon's death.

While Fanon does not openly oppose armed methods to political ones, as was subsequently done in the mid-1960s by the guerrilla war ideologists in Latin America, he too underestimates the importance of political work: with him, it is the reverse side of his absolutisation of violence.

Fanon's conception of the motive forces of the revolutionary process and the alignment of class forces in the independence struggle also bears the imprint of his idea that armed struggle is the sole method of revolution.

When an anti-imperialist movement assumes the form of a guerrilla or

popular war its focus is inevitably in the rural areas because the peasantry constitutes its main manpower. It could not be otherwise since the cities, according to the definition of the guerrilla war ideologists, are strongholds of colonialism. All its repressive power is concentrated in the cities which is why the guerrilla resistance cannot start there. The liberation of the cities occurs at the closing stage of the war. This was the case in Algeria, Vietnam and the former Portuguese colonies, and indeed wherever the guerrilla movement evolved into a people's liberation war it was crowned with success. The guerrilla war has always drawn its strength from the rural areas and peasants formed the bulk of the insurgent units. It could not have been otherwise. The guerrilla movement is doomed to failure unless it is supported by the peasantry. And this was exactly what happened in the latter half of the 1960s in some Latin American countries.

The overwhelming majority of the population in the colonies and dependencies are peasants, and a great deal depends on the stand they take. This cannot be gainsaid, and Fanon is right on that score. But that still leaves unanswered the question of the revolutionary potential of the peasantry, of what and how sets the rural masses in motion and what can lend consistency to their behaviour in the revolution; of whether this consistency is inherent in the very position and psychology of the peasants or should it be introduced from without and bolstered by a strong alliance with the consistently revolutionary urban forces, notably an alliance with the working class.

In his treatment of these questions Fanon does not go beyond a narrow empirical approach. The fact that the guerrilla war had been supported on a class basis by millions of share-croppers. Algerian peasants and farmhands led him to the conclusion that all the peasantry everywhere is revolutionary.

## **Basic Flaws**

There are three basic flaws in Fanon's assessment of the revolutionary potential of the peasantry.

1. His recognition of the revolutionary nature of the peasantry goes hand in hand with the repudiation of the revolutionary nature of the working class in the colonies. Fanon believes that the description of the European proletariat as the main motive force of the revolution is inapplicable to the colonial society where the working class is among the privileged strata deriving benefits from the colonial regime. According to Fanon, in the colonies only the peasantry is the true proletariat in the sense that it has nothing to lose. Fanon does not think that the colonial working class is a revolutionary or even a national force. He concedes these qualities only to the peasantry.

Such a stand has been promoted to some extent by the trade-unionist tendencies of the colonial proletariat's elite and the downgrading of the revolutionary role of the peasantry current among the part of the intelligentsia in the colonial countries that has been unable to resist the temptation of modelling the theory of the revolutionary movement in the colonies on that of the industrialised countries. Whatever Fanon's motives were, however, nothing can justify his nihilistic attitude to the working class in the colonies as a whole. He puts forward an imaginary and unrealistic alternative: either the proletariat or the peasantry, while in fact the interests of revolution and progress and their victory call for pooling the revolutionary potentials of both, for an alliance between the proletariat and the peasantry and, moreover, the recognition of the guiding role of the proletarian ideology.

Fanon's works are riddled with contradictions. He sometimes warns of the dangers of the city "opposing" the village but many of his provisions are objectively directed against the union between the working class and the peasantry, the union that offers the main hope for a non-capitalist, socialist development of the former colonies.

Fanon does not say that the peasantry should produce the spearhead force of the struggle from its midst. He believes that his role will be assumed by a "revolutionary minority" leading the peasantry. But what of the class nature of that minority? Fanon's reply is based on the method of exclusion. He is strongly opposed to the hegemony of the bourgeoisie but he also openly rejects the hegemony of the working class. What then remains? The petty-bourgeois stand of the intermediate strata? But for how long can this stand be maintained between the opposing poles of the bourgeoisie and the proletariat?

Speaking about the "revolutionary minority" Fanon reveals an awareness of the fact that it should be described, not in terms of its class identity or background, but in terms of its class essence. One can subscribe to that. But if so, then why does he rule out the possibility that the minority could espouse the views of an "ideal proletariat", not the proletariat which picks up the crumbs from the table of the colonial masters, but a proletariat conscious of its historic mission? The vanguard of the peasantry can adopt its platform, as happened in Russia. And this was also the case in Vietnam where the party and the army were largely manned by peasants who had adopted proletarian ideology. And this was the road proposed and successfully followed by Amilcar Cabral who first suggested the term "ideal proletariat" whose role was, in his view, to be fulfilled by members of the intelligentsia.

Fanon did not even raise these questions and denied that solutions along these lines were possible.



2. Fanon's approach to the motive forces of the revolution is anti-historical: he ignores its stages and determines the motive forces once and for all — the Fanon who knew the limitations of nationalism and advanced an anti-capitalist perspective. But can the motive forces at the stages of the independence struggle and of anti-capitalist development be the same? Is it not likely that certain shifts and realignments would take place within them and the positions of the working class and the peasantry would change? Fanon gave no thought to that. But other ideologists of national democracy after him did. As early as 1964 Kwame Nkrumah wrote in his *Consciencism* about the constant changes within the "positive force" and Amilcar Cabral in the 1960s cast in a clear form the quest of the revolutionary potential of every social class with regard to national independence and socialism.

3. Fanon's third error in determining the motive forces of the revolution is closely linked with the question of the stages of revolutionary movement. He did not notice the class differentiation within the peasantry regarding it as a homogeneous social group with a common stand. Amilcar Cabral analysed the stratification in the rural society of the extremely backward "Portuguese" Guinea and stressed its influence on the peasants' attitude towards the struggle for independence. In the Algerian village the processes of stratification were undoubtedly more advanced, which made them exceedingly important factors in determining the peasantry's revolutionary potential at the stage of the independence struggle and, especially, at the stage of anti-capitalist development.

As has already been noted. Fanon was one of the ideologists who were aware of the limitations of the nationalist platform and who gravitated towards internationalism and anti-capitalism. But his legacy does show some "birthmarks" of nationalism. In both things he shares the destiny of the national democracy as a whole. Fanon's nationalistic errors are of two kinds: he has failed to understand the *class* character of the colonial rule. To him colonialism was the focus of ethnic rather than class contradictions. Hence any Frenchman in Algeria was an oppressor to him.

His other nationalistic error is linked with the first one. Fanon has not paid enough attention to the union with the democratic forces and the working class of the metropolis. In a broader context. Fanon failed to take into account the influence of existing socialism and the international communist movement on the destinies of the colonial nations although he spoke highly of the assistance of the socialist countries. This was due in large measure to his conviction that a unique and untrodden path had to be found, his fear of borrowing others' experience and the hopes he pinned on the "union of the wretched".

## **Striking a Balance**

Such are the main strong and weak points of Fanon's thinking. We have already mentioned that in his time the strong points undoubtedly prevailed. Fanon has gone down in history as a convinced and uncompromising fighter against imperialism and for a better future for the working people of Africa.

His ideas, however, go on living which makes it necessary to approach his legacy from two angles, from that of his time and the present-day situation. What had some justification in the conditions of the late 1950s cannot be condoned in the same way in the late 1970s. As the revolutionary process develops, accents in the assessment of ideological trends may change if the latter do not evolve in step with the time. Fanon is open to criticism for having had a somewhat limited historical horizon, proceeding as he did mainly from the experience of Algeria and often being unable in his theories to rise above that experience. Within the frame of reference of the 1950s much in Fanon's work can be attributed to the situation in the country or his personal experience. It has been noted, for example, that his preaching of violence is due to some extent to the striving of the intellectual and individualist isolated from his own people to link his destiny with them. From that standpoint, a guerrilla army as opposed to a city office was an ideal answer. In politics, however, to understand does not mean to forgive, especially if attempts are being made to carry the delusions of the 1950s and early 1960s into the 1970s and 1980s.

Today one should assess Fanon from the vantage ground of the experience of revolutionary struggle which Fanon was not destined to see and which we are witnessing. At the new stage, the stage of the socialist perspective. Fanon's errors assume great significance and are fraught with greater dangers for the progressive forces. Revolutionary theory as well as revolutionary practice in Africa have made great strides. We have already noted the important corrections introduced by the national democrats in Africa in their analysis of class alignments. Fundamental shifts have also taken place in the attitude of the revolutionary democrats to the universal laws of historical development, to Marxism-Leninism and the eradication of nationalistic prejudice. The error of absolutisation of the armed struggle has also been to a large extent overcome internationally. Neither Vietnam nor the former Portuguese colonies have committed it. Likewise, the lessons of history have not been lost on many people who advanced the guerrilla warfare as the ultimate answer, and they abandoned it in the mid-1970s (R. Debray, G. Chaliand). In some cases (G. Chaliand) this led to deep scepticism concerning the possibility of revolutionary development of the former colonies and dependencies and in other cases (R. Debray) to a more serious attitude to some old but eternal truths of Marxism-Leninism.

Fanon couldn't introduce corrections dictated by time in *The Wretched of the Earth*. But we must bear them in mind in assessing his legacy and dealing with attempts to present Fanon's conception as the ideal revolutionary theory of today and to use the name and ideas of the prominent fighter and thinker to back the prestige of essentially reactionary, pseudo-revolutionary left-wing extremist groupings.

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# BOOK REVIEWS

## A PIONEERING WORK OF AFRICAN HISTORY

**Forced Labour in Colonial Africa** by A.T. Nzula, I.I. Potekhin and A.Z. Zusmanovich; edited and introduced by Robin Cohen; London, Zed Press, 1979.

The book under review was first published in Moscow in 1933 under the title *The Working Class Movement and Forced Labour in Negro Africa*. Not only the title has been changed. According to the editor, Robin Cohen:

" . . . it was necessary to take certain liberties with, and make some additions to, the original text . . . Occasionally names and short passages were elided, and sentences altered to ensure greater readability and comprehension. The tables were redrawn, or compiled for the first time, from information presented in the text. The notes at the end of the chapters were all provided either by myself or the translator, Hugh Jenkins. In addition, certain chapters were retitled, or in one case, split into two, while many of the sub-headings have been added by the editor . . . the text printed here is not always a word for word translation from the original."

This means we are confronted here with a book that has been "strictly edited" and in the absence of the original Russian text we are not in a position to compare the two.

Besides these remarks by the editor and the translator's note which are at times provocative ("those unaccustomed to the rhetoric of Soviet political writing will doubtless find the style of this work at times rather repetitive" p.XI) the book is of great interest to those concerned with African problems for the following reasons:

- a) This is an authentic book published by and on behalf of the anti-colonial and communist forces of the time;
- b) it gives an insight into the thinking and level of research on Africa in the Soviet Union at that time and therefore destroys some of the anti-communist and anti-Soviet myths that the Soviet Union started showing interest in Africa only after the Second World War;
- c) it shows the beginnings of the now continuous collaboration — in every sphere including the academic field — between the Soviet Union and genuine African revolutionaries.

These general remarks do not by any means dissuade us from pointing out some of the weaknesses of the book which are mainly political in nature — weaknesses which are used by Cohen in his attempt to "rescue Nzula from oblivion" and by doing so degrading the movements which were so dear to Nzula.

During the thirties the Comintern theories on Africa — social content, forces of revolution, class nature and alliances — were still at the formative stage and this is natural and reflected in this book. Besides, the Communist Party of South Africa at that time found itself embroiled in an inner-party struggle which took many forms, and there were tensions, strains and stresses which manifested themselves throughout the party. Albert Nzula was not above these conflicts — he was, perhaps more than any African communist of his time, a product of these controversies. His analysis and evaluation of events and his attitude reflect not only an aspect of these tendencies, but also the level of understanding of social forces within South African society. He played a prominent role in shifting the balance in favour of the radical, revolutionary forces within our liberation movement.

This brings us to Robin Cohen's "Introduction" to the book. His remarks about the African National Congress and the Communist Party ("the conservative right-wing elements who were to take control of the Congress and hold it until the 1960's" (p 6); "the communist presence in the ANC was undermined not by Nzula and his comrades . . . but by Gumede's precipitous and unnecessary defence of the Soviet Union . . ." (p 7) ) are provocative, to say

the least. Cohen's anti-Sovietism knows no bounds: the League of African Rights was disbanded and this was a "most blatant example of foolish dictation from Moscow" (p 8).

Writing about Nzula's death in Moscow — something known by almost every member of our movement — Cohen goes to the extent of stating that Nzula "was killed on instructions from the Comintern" (p 15). What are his sources for this serious allegation? They are mainly rumours propagated by some South African "leftists" especially Trotskyists. An interview with C.L.R. James, a well-known black Trotskyist who bases his argument on hearsay from Jomo Kenyatta, a man known for his narrow-mindedness even during the time he had contacts with the Comintern, does not help us. If Cohen wanted information about the circumstances surrounding Nzula's death he could easily have contacted the liberation movement of South Africa or even Soviet scholars. But he preferred to depend on unverified rumours in what is supposed to be a "scientific" introduction to a book otherwise so valuable to African freedom fighters. Perhaps it should have been the duty of Zed Press to edit Robin Cohen's introduction.

Though these and many other distortions, clichés and clumsy formulations in the preface and introduction reduce the revolutionary impact of the book, they do not affect the overall value of the book whose main essence lies in the fact that what Nzula, Potekhin and Zusmanovich predicted in the early thirties has been proved correct by the subsequent developments in Africa. An appendix on publications by Albert Nzula makes the book more valuable.

Lunga Modise.

(A profile of Albert Nzula by Historicus was published in *The African Communist* No. 65, Second Quarter, 1976. — Ed.)



## THE POLITICS OF COMMITMENT

**Burger's Daughter**, by Nadine Gordimer, published by Jonathan Cape. Price £5.95.

This is the second novel within a matter of months apparently inspired by the tragic story of Bram Fischer. What must it have been like, Nadine Gordimer asked herself, to be the daughter of a man like Fischer? How were you affected by his imprisonment, suffering and death? How were your thoughts and actions influenced by his beliefs, his fate and fame? How were you able to free yourself from his shadow, do your own thing, be your own self? Was there a conflict and was it resolved, was it capable of solution?

Any book on such a theme should be fascinating to readers of *The African Communist*, more particularly when the pages are spattered with the names of people like Mandela, Mofutsanyana, Nkosi, Moses Kotane, J.B. Marks, Yusuf Dadoo, Gana Makabeni, Thibedi, Bunting, Sobukwe, Kgosa, and which discusses the relationship between the Communist Party and the African National Congress, the work of the Comintern, the 1946 African miners' strike, and many other thorny problems in our history.

Regrettably, this proves to be a book that, once taken up, is difficult not to put down. Nadine Gordimer's passionless prose is, as usual, exquisitely sculptured but excruciatingly remote, and the reader is always conscious of the artist at work, polishing the last phrase, carefully selecting the right word after rejecting many others — but to say what? After penetrating the tangled thicket of her writing one comes across, not the startling revelation, the subtle nuance the blinding truth that makes the encounter with, say, Henry James (whose style often reminds one of her own) infinitely rewarding, but a banality which would have been more effective if said bluntly without the artifice and even occasional artistry which, because it holds the reader at arm's length, becomes in the end merely irritating.

Rosa Burger drifts through the first two thirds of this novel passively and without emotion, observing, recording, classifying, a frail shadow of a human being caught up in events which are too big for her. Like the author, she is an observer, not a participant. Much of what she says is sharp and shrewd (though the politics, derived almost entirely from Roux' "Time Longer Than Rope" and the gossip that floats about in left-wing circles, is a travesty). Because Rosa herself is not involved, however, neither is the reader — there is no internal tension, no development, only an apparently endless, over-meticulous setting and re-setting of the scene.

Rosa only begins to change when she goes overseas, and meets her father's first wife, now living in the south of France. Why did Rosa leave South Africa? Perhaps, she thinks, "I wanted to know how to defect from him" — her father, his memory and the duties he still imposed on her from beyond the grave. There was a whole world outside what he lived for of which she knew nothing. Far away from the tensions of South Africa, she begins to relax, eats mussels and drinks wine, goes to bohemian parties, takes a lover.

"Bernard Chabaliere's mistress isn't Lionel Burger's daughter; she's certainly not accountable to the Future . . ."

But something is missing from her life. Moving to London, Rosa drifts into the circle of South African exiles, bumps into the little black boy who had been taken into their home and with whom as a child, she used to play round her father's swimming pool, now grown into manhood and black consciousness, bitter and accusing. If Lionel Burger had died in prison, Zwelinzima Vulindlela's father had been killed by the security police while in detention — they said they found him hanged in his cell. Now the conflict begins to rage in Rosa's breast, now the novel begins to take off, even the tortured prose straightens out. Rosa returns home, renews her old links, and inevitably, during the October 1977 crackdown, is herself swept up in a security police raid and held in detention under section 6 of the Terrorism Act.

"Our children and our children's children. The sins of the fathers; at last, the children avenge on the fathers the sins of the fathers. Their children and children's children; that was the Future, father, in hands not foreseen".

"Burger's Daughter" is the third novel of Nadine Gordimer's to have been banned. In a way this is a tribute to be valued higher than the Hertzog or CNA prizes, even though if, like the authorities, one is searching for revolutionary content one might feel it is undeserved.

Z.N.

## THE LITERATURE OF BLACK LIBERATION

**Freedomways Reader** Edited by Ernest Kaiser, published by International Publisher. Price \$2.25.

There have been many leading black progressive thinkers and writers over the past quarter of a century who have advanced the cause of black liberation. Among the more recent contributions is the *Freedomways Reader*.

This new book is a selection of interesting and inspiring articles, essays and reviews dealing with the more subtle forms of racism, Africa, black history, music, literature and a span of other topics, which have been published in *Freedomways* quarterly review during the past decade.

James Baldwin, who has written the foreword describes *Freedomways* as having addressed itself to the task of re-interpreting the American reality. This book reveals something of the hidden talent of black writers and artists whose work has been suppressed by racist prejudice and exploitation.

'The Great White Hope' and 'Look Homeward Baby' are essays describing individual experiences which illustrate the reality of black American existence. Ollie Harrington's 'Look Homeward Baby' portrays his vivid experience as a black American who remained in Europe after the war and later returned to the betrayed American cities. With continued revolutionary fervour he assists with the sales drive of the *Daily Worker* and encounters the determined and unrelenting revolt in the ghettos.

'Black kids painting huge murals on discouragingly neglected slum buildings are expressing that revolution . . . A Black Renaissance has already been born'.

In a totally different key John H. Clarke explores the works of Chekh Anta Diop, depicting him as one of the most able of present day scholars writing about Africa, and also one of the greatest living black historians. Clarke's review of Diop's book *The African Origin of Civilization — Myth or Reality* stresses the main thesis of the book in redefining the place of Egypt in African history in particular and the world in general. In his first chapter Diop looks to the Southern African origins of the people later known as Egyptians. He maintains that leading antiquarians of the time were exponents of the view that the ancient Ethiopians, the black people of remote antiquity were the earliest of all civilized peoples.

Apart from the many stimulating articles written in *Freedomways* what strikes the reader continuously are the untold references to that giant leader and comrade Paul Robeson. Charles H. Wright in one section of the book tells of 'Paul Robeson at Peekskill', scene of an unprecedented racist attack by



legionnaires and veteran forces in 1949 to deal with the 'domestic Communists'. Less than a year after that ferocious and fomented anti-communist and racist bombardment, Robeson's passport was cancelled, denying him the opportunity to make a living in the USA and sentencing him to the slow death of economic strangulation. But not only did he refuse to die, he lived to see all of his unpopular causes become a part of the everyday American way of life.

Mention must also be made of Anthony Monteiro's 'The Sixth Pan African Congress: Agenda for African — Afro-American Solidarity' which puts Pan Africanism in its historical perspective. This Congress held that the working people must lead the movement to liquidate colonialism and end racism. 'Colonial workers must be in the front lines of the battle against imperialism'. The author brings to the fore the intensification of the national liberation struggles after World War II causing the rapid breakdown of the system of classical colonialism. Later he discusses the effect of neo-colonialism and the second stage of struggle for the independent African nations — socio-economic development.

The *Freedomways Reader* contains over 35 articles and illustrates the tremendous wealth and potential of black writers and historians, while at the same time opening up new horizons for the reader.

R.

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## **IMPERIALISM IS NOT A PAPER TIGER**

**Free Africa Marches** (Peace and Socialism International Publishers, Prague 1978).

At a time when the revolutionary process in Africa is developing at a rapid pace and acquiring a qualitatively new dimension, the attention of the world is once again sharply focussed on the African continent. Imperialism's future is vitally linked to Africa and it has embarked on a concerted campaign to halt the revolutionary momentum. True, its ability to use gunboat diplomacy has been curtailed by the changed balance of forces, but it is not a 'paper tiger' and still has many stratagems.

To understand two fundamental issues, both of which are inextricably linked, has become the urgent necessity of today viz:

— the ways in which the newly independent African countries can break out of

the stranglehold of imperialist domination and lay the basis for a transformation to a socialist society and . . .

— the successful completion of the liberation struggle in Southern Africa.

*World Marxist Review* has produced this pamphlet which provides valuable insights to the above questions. It contains a series of articles from various parts of Africa, as well as articles by comrades Dadoo, Tambo, Njoma and Nkomo.

The section 'The Revolutionary Process in the Socialist-Oriented Countries of Africa' is an interesting resume of an exchange of views between communists from Africa and the Middle East.

From these contributions what emerges is the necessity to mobilise large sectors of the community under a common and consistent anti-imperialist programme; the leading role of the working class in all stages of the struggle; the necessity for an independent working class party; the necessity for the mobilisation and genuine participation of the masses in the post-independence period, failure of which will lead to dominance by reactionary forces; the extent of imperialist intrigue and the clear understanding that the only way to defeat this is to develop and consolidate an all-round relationship with the socialist community, especially the Soviet Union.

The contributors have also frankly analysed their experiences, identifying their mistakes and setbacks as well as their successes. In the case of Algeria and Sudan this provides invaluable lessons.

The pamphlet also belies bourgeois attempts to brand communist and progressive forces as ossified dogmatists. Here one has a living example of Marxism-Leninism as a dynamic and creative guide to action. However, the brevity of the pamphlet has meant that many of the fundamental issues raised cannot be fully explored. The result is that the exchange of views between the African and Middle East comrades is too brief to allow a thorough grasp of all the issues tackled.

Nevertheless it is a useful pamphlet in that it brings the reader's attention to many fundamental and crucial questions of our times.

A.

## **THE SOWETO UPRISING**

John Kane-Berman: **Soweto — Black Revolt, White Reaction** (Ravan Press, Johannesburg, 1978). Published in England, 1979, by Pluto Press under the title **The Method in the Madness**.

The Soweto uprising of 1976 was such a crucial event in the development of the liberation struggle in South Africa that it has given rise to a number of books aimed, in part at least, at assessing the significance of what happened. This is the latest of such books, and it is a marked improvement on its predecessors.

This is because the author is a careful observer who respects the facts. Not for him the hasty assembly of a few impressions to fit a certain propaganda message. He has looked at the context of the uprising and sought to describe its causes and its progress, continuing on into 1977/78. In doing this he has marshalled a substantial amount of relevant information which is presented clearly and readably.

He has a sharp eye for facts which run counter to uninformed expectations. For example he notes (p. 152) that Coloured students in the Cape attacked and damaged a great many more of their schools than African students did of theirs. And elsewhere, dealing with the responses of the business world to the unfolding crisis (p. 161-2) he points out that while the Association of Chambers of Commerce in 1976 limited itself to proposing minor reforms in the way in which government policies are implemented, in 1960 it had gone much further and proposed the abolition of job reservation *and influx control*. Indeed, Assocom together with four other major employer organisations such as the FCI and Chamber of Mines had initially suggested, for example, that the wife and children of urban African males be given the right to live and work in the area in which the man was based. But after being castigated by Dr. Verwoerd, the other four had backed down, and only Assocom had stuck to its ground. In 1976, by comparison, the major business interests collaborated in helping the government to make minor cosmetic changes, their chief innovation being the Urban Foundation.

But the author, a South African journalist who contributes to the *Financial Mail*, the (British) *Financial Times* and *Guardian*, fails to offer any explanation of these contrasts. Indeed, at the analytic level, the book is weak, and the weakness is most marked in his treatment of the subjective factors in the uprising. Either unable for practical reasons to research the way in which the school student movement was organised before and during the uprising, or more likely unwilling for ideological reasons to portray the truly revolutionary depth



and character of the mass struggles of 1976, the author has confined himself to a superficial account of the organisational and political (tactics and strategy) dimensions of the struggle, and neglected the crucial question of how the underground apparatus of the ANC was connected with the organisations of the school students.

Even when he arrives at correct conclusions (e.g. that blacks will not get the sort of education system they want until they hold political power — p. 191) he does so in a pragmatic way which gives his judgements no firm basis in an analysis of the system. Take for example the fact that although the government had had a policy of using Afrikaans as a medium of instruction in African schools for many years, it only began to rigidly impose this in practice in 1974. Why? Kane-Berman's explanation is that the previous, more flexible application of the policy ceased with the death of the then Secretary of Bantu Education in that year, the implication being that he was replaced by a more doctrinaire official. But might not the change be connected more fundamentally with the challenge that Black Consciousness was beginning to pose among black students?

The liberation movement has already learnt much from the events of '76. But in the Leninist spirit of studying intensively all popular struggles, learning from them and generalising the experience, scrutinising failures as well as successes, we cannot be satisfied yet that we have extracted all the lessons of that rich period. This book is far from being the last word on its subject.

J.V.

## **30TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE GERMAN DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC**

**Writings Beyond the Wall: Literature from the German Democratic Republic**, edited by Edward Mackinnon, Gina Kalla and John Green. An Artery Publication. Price £1.50, plus £0.30 p&p from 51 Kingscourt Road, London SW16.

The German Democratic Republic celebrated its 30th birthday last October in an atmosphere of jubilation and enthusiasm. Thanks to the hard work and dedication born of socialism, plus generous assistance from the Soviet Union and other socialist states, it had raised its people from the slough of the Nazi defeat in 1945 to become one of the leading industrial nations with a standard of living higher than that of capitalist Britain, the home of the industrial revolution. Through the sheer excellence of its performance it won not only the admiration of its friends but also the grudging recognition and respect of its ideological enemies, who in recent years have been concentrating a great deal of their attention on attempts to hide the achievements of the people of the GDR from the rest of the world.

In spheres such as sport the prowess of the GDR is obvious to all, but in the cultural sphere difficulties of language and communication have made it more difficult to judge both the quantity and the quality of work in the GDR. In his introduction to this book Edward Mackinnon writes:

"If, therefore, we have given our anthology of literature from the German Democratic Republic the provocative title *Writings beyond the Wall*, it is not to reinforce cold-war clichés about that country but to draw attention to the wall that has been created in the West to cut us off from cultural developments in the GDR and all the other socialist countries . . .

"Although the West German state has failed in its attempt to pose as the political representative of all German people, it has been allowed to preserve an unquestioned cultural ascendancy. This anthology is conceived as a small contribution to correcting the imbalance. It is our modest tribute to the GDR on the occasion of its 30th anniversary on October 7, 1979".

In bringing this selection of the work of GDR writers to the notice of the English-speaking world, the editors have performed a valuable service. Through its outstanding contribution in the sphere of solidarity, the GDR has won friends in the ranks of the liberation movements everywhere. This book demonstrates that words are as important as logistics in the struggle for the new world.

P.M,

# THE AFRICAN COMMUNIST

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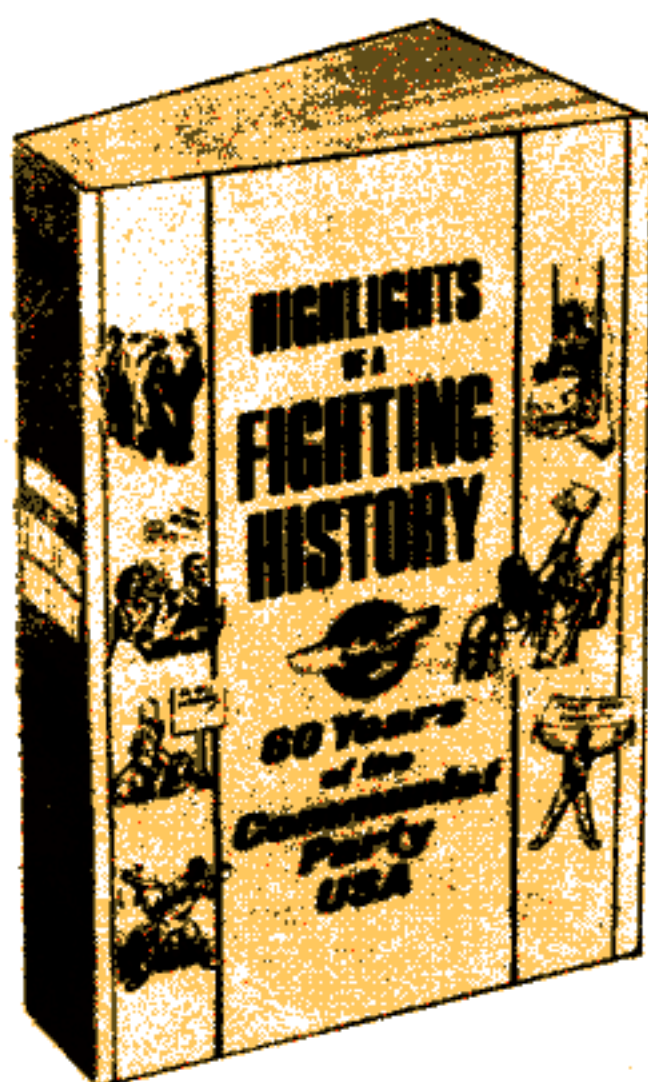
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